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New Zealand's Forgotten Warriors:
3NZ Division in the South Pacific in World War II

A thesis presented in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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The author, Reginald Hedley Newell, asserts the moral right to be identified as the author of this work.

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the origins, deployment, operations and demise of 3NZ Division. It argues that the forces that became the Division were sent to Fiji because of a perceived strategic threat, particularly from airpower, if the islands were seized by the Japanese. The Division was relieved in Fiji by the Americans but returned to the Pacific in 1943 because New Zealand wanted to earn a place at the peace table and the Americans lacked troops in the theatre. Whether the Division was primarily an offensive or garrison unit remained unclear throughout its existence and influenced its constitution. Major General Harold Barrowclough, its commander from 1942 to 1944, had somewhat different strengths from his fellow divisional commander Major General Bernard Freyberg, and operated in a very different environment, with amphibious operations at brigade level. Furthermore, his division operated in an area dominated by the United States Navy rather than the more familiar culture of the British Army. More generally, the relationship between the New Zealanders and the Americans in the South Pacific was complex, generally symbiotic but occasionally unfriendly and even lethal. The perception in New Zealand that service in the South Pacific was less onerous than service in the Mediterranean ignores the often unpleasant and even deadly conditions faced by the soldiers of 3NZ Division. The Division's combat operations contributed significantly to the neutralisation of the Japanese stronghold of Rabaul.

Except for a brief period in 1942, 3NZ Division took second place in New Zealand's war effort to 2NZ Division. This reflected Wellington's general inclination to favour Commonwealth over local defence, and, despite some wavering, New Zealand declined to follow Australia and focus its efforts in the Pacific. Lack of manpower to field two divisions resulted in 3NZ Division having only two brigades and growing demands from the Air Force, industry and agriculture ultimately led to its disbandment. Thereafter it faded from the public consciousness and its contribution disregarded. The men and women of 3NZ Division have undeservedly become New Zealand's forgotten warriors.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to dedicate this work to the one-eyed Vickers Machine Gunner who defended the Waimakariri River and the lady ambulance driver on the West Coast (my father and mother), and the men and women of 3NZ Division.

I would like to thank Dr James Watson and Dr John Tonkin-Covell; my doctoral supervisors for their encouragement and advice; Mrs Kirsty Nolan and Mrs Veronica Godfrey for typing this thesis and enduring interminable alterations and revisions; the staff at Archives NZ; the staff at Alexander Turnbull Library; the staff at NZ Defence Force Base Records, Trentham; the staff at the NZ Defence Force Library; John Crawford of NZ Defence Force; Brian Hewson for generously providing copies of his American documents; Jeffrey Plowman; Mrs Joan Clouston for insight into her father Major General Barrowclough, access to his war diaries and encouragement; and all the veterans of 3NZ Division who patiently fielded questions about events so long ago and who clarified and encouraged; the American Seabees, submariners and sailors who did likewise; above all to my wife Heather and son Michael.

Any errors are mine alone.

Reg Newell

Upper Hutt

31 March 2008

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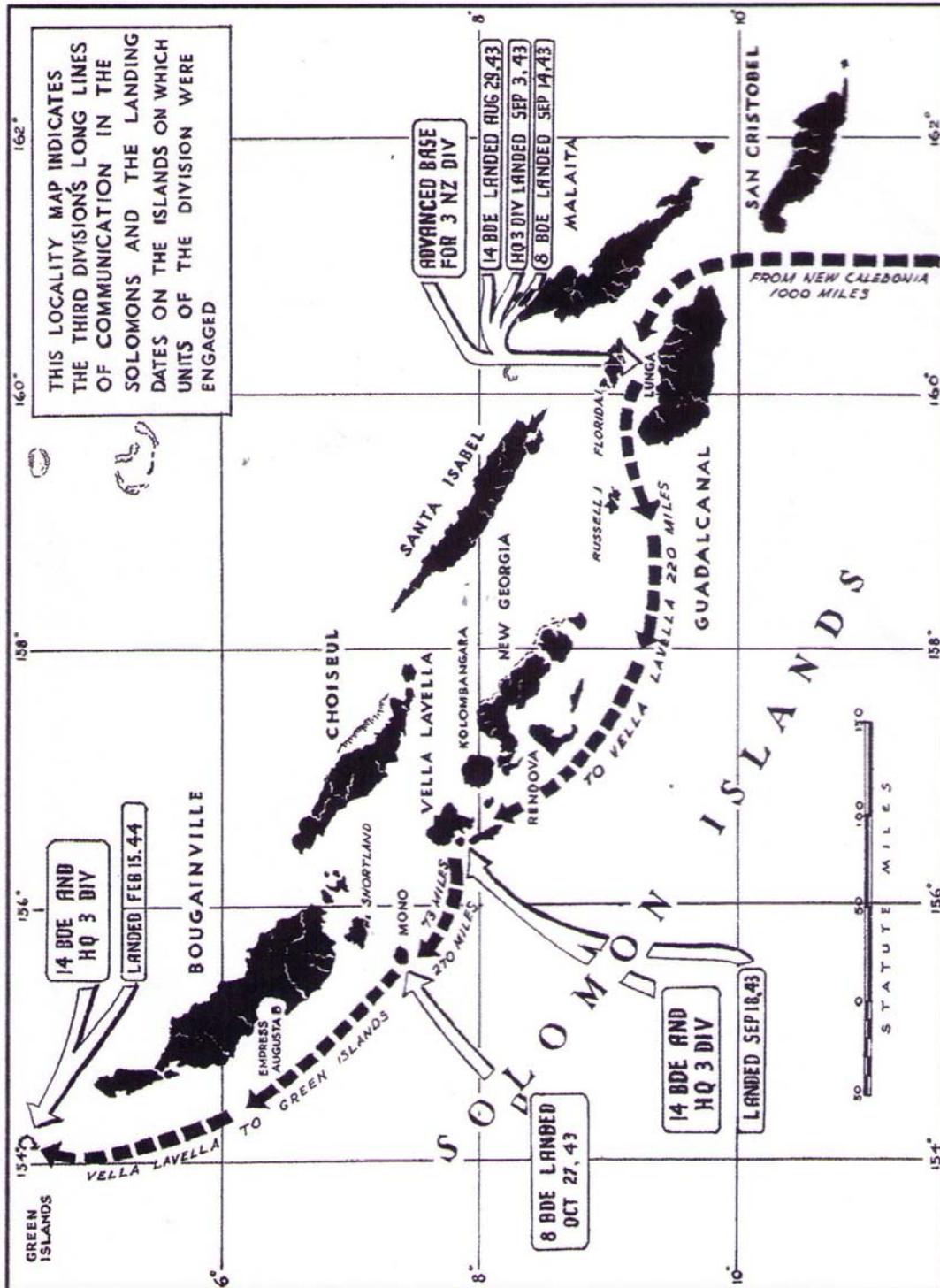
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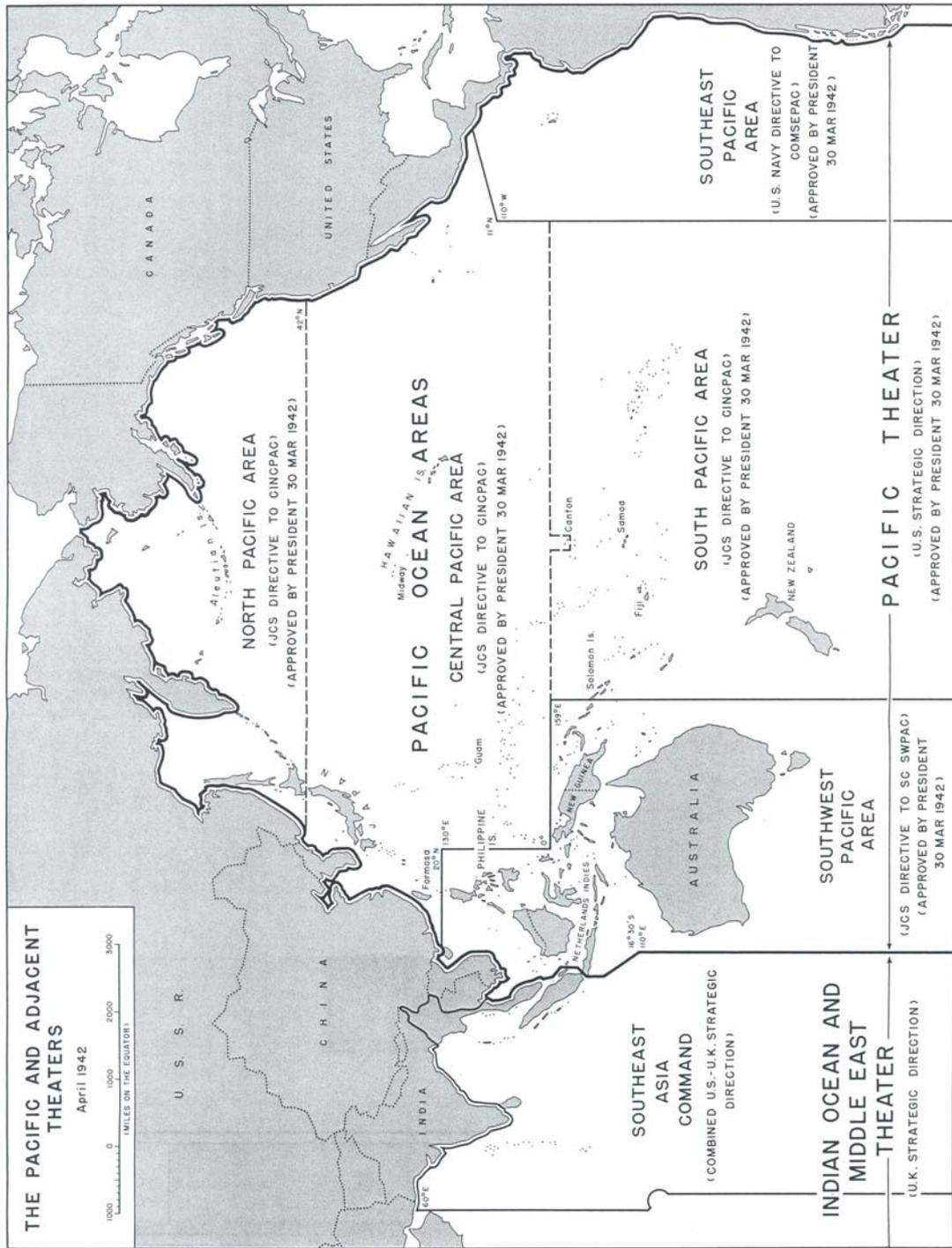
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THE SOLOMON ISLANDS, THIRD DIVISION HISTORIES COMMITTEE, PACIFIC SAGA,
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THE PACIFIC AND ADJACENT THEATRES, LOUIS MORTON, US ARMY IN WWIL, THE WAR IN THE PACIFIC, STRATEGY AND COMMAND; THE FIRST TWO YEARS, WASHINGTON: OFFICE OF MILITARY HISTORY, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, 1962, INSIDE BACK COVER.



INTRODUCTION

In May 1947 a somewhat plaintive letter was sent to the Prime Minister of New Zealand. The writer enquired

Why the New Zealand Third Division was maintained in the Islands when it was plainly intimated by the Americans that we were not wanted and we ourselves could see that we were far more nuisance than we were worth.

Opinion was divided amongst the troops as to the reason. Some said it was a part of Empire strategy and others thought it was New Zealand policy.

I would be very grateful if you would tell me why the force was kept there for so long.¹

A reply was prepared by the Permanent Head of the Prime Minister's Department simply stating that

this Force was provided for operations against the Japanese, in which it was engaged for a time, by arrangement with the United States Command in the Pacific. In view of the course of operations in the latter stages of the Pacific War, it was withdrawn first to New Caledonia and then to New Zealand to other employment.

It was, of course, a matter of policy that New Zealand take a full part in the war in all theatres, and her participation in the Pacific in air, sea and land operations was an effective contribution to the victory in the Pacific Theatre.²

The interchange exemplifies a number of features of 3NZ Division's war. These included a lack of clarity as to its role, doubt as to what it had accomplished, concern

¹ A.K. Fagan to Prime Minister, 20 May 1947, Archives NZ EA 87/21/1.

² Permanent Head of Prime Minister's Department to A.K.Fagan, 28 June 1947, Archives NZ EA 87/21/1.

that the Americans had been dissatisfied with it, and questions of whose interests it had been serving. Certainly the Division's achievements seem to have been consigned to oblivion with little modern public awareness of even the existence of the Division and its personnel. This is sadly ironic in view of the fame of 2NZ Division which served in the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations.

This thesis will address the issues of how and why the Division came to be formed, how and why it was developed and deployed as it was, its relationship with the Americans, the impact Major General Barrowclough had on the Division, the conditions which the troops had to contend with, their combat operations, the reasons for its disbandment and its legacy and significance. An assessment will be made as to whether the Division did indeed make 'an effective contribution' to victory in the South Pacific.

Given the scale of New Zealand's deployment of men and resources into the South Pacific in World War Two, the literature relating to it is surprisingly sparse. This is especially so with 3NZ Division. The two works to focus exclusively³ on it were published by the New Zealand Army Board in 1945⁴ and suffer from the fact that they were written during wartime and hence there were aspects that were undoubtedly censored, diplomatically omitted, or simply not known by the author. Several works were written in the immediate post-war period that touched directly or indirectly on the operations of 3NZ Division. More recently works have been published dealing with New Zealand's role in the Pacific War, with the Division mentioned incidentally.

Regarding the origins of 3NZ Division, the Army Board publication Pacific Story describes the slow initial deployment of New Zealand forces to Fiji and the build up to brigade strength prior to December 1941. It is a descriptive account and no explanation is offered as to why troops were deployed, or whether in sufficient quantities. The Official History of New Zealand's role in the Pacific War entitled The Pacific⁵ was written by the former Divisional Intelligence Officer and describes in its first chapter

³ I exclude the work by R D Munro which is acknowledged as derived from the two Army Board publications. R D Munro, 3rd New Zealand Division, 2NZEFIP 1940-44, Upper Hutt: Published by the author, 1993.

⁴ The Army Board, Pacific Story, Wellington: The Army Board, 1945; The Army Board, From Guadalcanal to Nissau, Wellington: The Army Board, 1945.

⁵ Oliver A Gillespie, The Pacific, Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1952.

the lead up to the war with Japan. Chapter 2 deals with the perceived threat to Fiji and the danger a Japanese-occupied Fiji would pose. It describes in detail the slow build up of New Zealand forces and interaction with the Fijian authorities. The account is descriptive and uncritical. The reasons for New Zealand's deployment of a significant part of its miniscule resources to Fiji are spelled out in an unpublished subthesis by Matthew Gubb.⁶ Although not focused solely on Fiji, Gubb argues that there was and is an Australasian strategic imperative to deny Fiji to any hostile power and to maintain order there.

W. David McIntyre writes on the preparations New Zealand made for war and the Labour Government's preference for defensive airpower.⁷ New Zealand, albeit with reservations, followed the Singapore strategy, which is the subject of another of his works.⁸ J.T. Henderson produced an in-depth examination of New Zealand's defence policy in the interwar years and early war years.⁹ Henderson emphasises the limited military resources of New Zealand and its reliance on the Royal Navy for defence. Ian McGibbon's study of New Zealand's defence policy¹⁰ between 1914 and 1942 highlights the tension between Imperial Defence and New Zealand's localised defence needs. The importance of Fiji is mentioned within the context of the 1939 Pacific Defence Conference. Various modern works highlight the changes in airpower technology and consequent strategic effects,¹¹ but the significance of this in regard to Fiji and New Zealand's deployment of troops there has been generally overlooked.

Regarding the development of the Division, Gillespie highlights the uncertainty of its mission, the muddled dialogue between Wellington and Washington, and the key role played by Admiral King in suggesting that New Zealand prepare troops for amphibious

⁶ Matthew Gubb, 'The Military Role of Australia and New Zealand in the South Pacific', a subthesis submitted for the degree of Master of Arts (Strategic Studies) in the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1990.

⁷ W. David McIntyre New Zealand Prepares For War, Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 1988.

⁸ W. David McIntyre, The Rise and Fall of the Singapore Naval Base 1919-1942, London: Macmillan, 1979.

⁹ J.T. Henderson 'The Defence of New Zealand – A Theoretical Approach to the Study of the Formulation and Substance of New Zealand Defence Policy 1935-1943', unpublished MA thesis in Political Science, University of Canterbury, 1971.

¹⁰ Ian McGibbon, Blue-Water Rationale – The Naval Defence of New Zealand 1914-42, Wellington: Government Printer, 1981.

¹¹ Eric Bergerud, Fire in the Sky, New York: Penguin Books, 2000; John Burton, Fortnight of Infamy – the Collapse of Allied Airpower West of Pearl Harbor, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2006.

training. The initially dysfunctional command relationships in the South Pacific have been highlighted by Edwin P. Hoyt.¹² However, no work really addresses why 3NZ Division was deployed into the South Pacific, given the threat to New Zealand had largely evaporated at Midway in June 1942.

Strangely, given the amount of interest in the history of combat operations, there has been very little work done on the actual fighting undertaken by 3NZ Division. The Army Board publication From Guadalcanal to Nissan¹³ covers the fighting in a descriptive, somewhat sparse way. The Pacific devotes a chapter, entitled 'Three Island Actions' to the fighting, but this is also of a descriptive nature. The various battalion 'unofficial histories' contain nuggets of information relating to the fighting. John Crawford wrote an article in the now defunct New Zealand Defence Quarterly on Operation Goodtime.¹⁴ He has also produced a booklet describing the activities of the three services in the Solomons Campaign.¹⁵ Dick Horton has mentioned the Division's combat operations on Vella Lavella and the Treasury Islands in passing in his examination of the New Georgia Campaign.¹⁶ Harry A. Gailey has also touched on Operation Goodtime in his account of the Bougainville campaign.¹⁷ William L. McGee focuses on amphibious operations in the South Pacific. He describes 14 Brigade's operations on Vella Lavella in a few sentences but deals with Goodtime at length.¹⁸ Ronald Spector provides a good overview of Operation Cartwheel and refers to New Zealand's participation in the taking of the Treasury Islands.¹⁹ Recent works generally pass over the New Zealand land war in the Pacific lightly, in a descriptive type of way,

¹² Edwin P. Hoyt, How They Won the War in the Pacific – Nimitz and his Admirals, Guildford CT: Lyons Press, 2002.

¹³ Army Board, From Guadalcanal to Nissan.

¹⁴ John Crawford, 'Kiwis Ashore – the Battle for Mono', New Zealand Defence Quarterly, Summer 1993.

¹⁵ John Crawford, New Zealand's Pacific Front Line – Guadalcanal – Solomon Islands Campaign 1942-45, Wellington: NZ Defence Force, 1992.

¹⁶ D.C. Horton, New Georgia: Pattern for Victory, London: Pan Books, 1972.

¹⁷ Harry A. Gailey, Bougainville – The Forgotten Campaign, 1943-45, Louisville: University of Kentucky Press, 1991.

¹⁸ William L. McGee, Amphibious Operations in the South Pacific in WWII Vol II The Amphibians are Coming, Santa Barbara, California: BMC Publications, 2000; and The Solomons Campaigns 1942-1943, Santa Barbara, California: BMC Publications 2002.

¹⁹ Ronald H. Spector, Eagle Against the Sun – The American War with Japan, New York: Viking, 1984, p.244.

with nothing new added.²⁰ Army, Air Force and Navy activities tend to be described together and in this context the Division's significance seems meagre.²¹

Some specialist histories touch on 3NZ Division.²² Most make very little reference to combat. Jeffrey Plowman's works are an exception to this, providing detailed information on 3NZ Division's tanks, including combat on the Green Islands.²³ A combatant's memoir is Frank Rennie's Regular Soldier,²⁴ which provides detail on Vella Lavella, the 'Commando Raid' and Squarepeg from a participant's viewpoint. A set of oral histories has been compiled dealing with New Zealand's war with Japan, of which five of fourteen are from members of 3NZ Division.²⁵ Some of these provide information on how combat occurred. The role and fate of the coastwatchers and their 'soldier-companions' from 3NZ Division are mentioned in the official history on Prisoners of War²⁶ and in a specific study.²⁷ Dick Horton, a former coastwatcher, has described their activities and operations undertaken by 3NZ Division.²⁸ Other studies focus on coastwatching activities.²⁹

The best combat descriptions and analysis have been by American historians. Samuel Eliot Morison describes the Division's combat role in his semi-official history of the US

²⁰ Major M.R. Wicksteed, The New Zealand Army – A History from the 1840's to the 1980's, Wellington: Government Printer, 1982; Michael King, New Zealanders at War, Auckland: Heinemann Reed, 1981.

²¹ Matthew Wright, Pacific War – New Zealand and Japan 1941-45, Wellington: Reed, 2003; John Thompson, Warrior Nation – New Zealanders at the Front 1990-2000, Christchurch: Hazard Press, 2000; Ian McGibbon, New Zealand in the Second World War – the People, Battles and Legacy, Auckland: Hodder Moa Beckett, 2004.

²² Ian McGibbon, Kiwi Sappers – The Corps of Royal New Zealand Engineers, Auckland: Reed Books, 2002; Julia Millen, Salute to Service – A History of Royal New Zealand Corps of Transport and its Predecessors 1860-1996, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1996; J.S. Bolton A History of the Royal New Zealand Army Ordnance Corps, Wellington: Royal New Zealand Army Ordnance Corps, 1992; Alan Henderson, David Green and Peter Cooke, The Gunners - A History of New Zealand Artillery, North Shore Auckland: Penguin Group, 2008

²³ Jeffrey Plowman and Malcolm Thomas, New Zealand Armour in the Pacific 1939-45, Christchurch: Published by the authors, 2000; Jeffrey Plowman, Rampant Dragons – New Zealanders in Armour in World War II, Christchurch: Kiwi Armour, 2002.

²⁴ Frank Rennie, Regular Soldier – A Life in the New Zealand Army, Auckland: Endeavour Press, 1986.

²⁵ Megan Hutching, Against the Rising Sun, Auckland: Harper Collins, 2006.

²⁶ W. Wynne Mason, Prisoners of War, Wellington: War History Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1954, pp.160-161.

²⁷ D.O.W. Hall 'Coastwatchers', in Episodes and Studies Volume Two, Wellington: War History Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1954.

²⁸ Dick Horton, Between the Thunder and the Sun, London: The Book Guild Ltd, 1998.

²⁹ Walter Lord and A.B. Feuer, Coastwatching in World War II: Operations Against the Japanese in the Solomon Islands 1941-43, Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2006; and Eric A. Feldt, The Coastwatchers, New York: Nelson Doubleday, 1979.

Navy.³⁰ The US Army also devoted a volume in its official history series to the Solomons.³¹ The three most useful volumes are United States Marine Corps (USMC) histories.³² Shaw and Kane provide detailed information on Goodtime. Key to understanding the complexity of amphibious operations in the Pacific is the work by Isely and Crowl.³³ A more modern work by Lorelli covers 3NZ Division's operations.³⁴ Dyer's work on Admiral Turner, USN, provides useful information on amphibious operations in the South Pacific and slender manpower resources.³⁵ A symposium on Australian amphibious assaults provides a point of context for those of 3NZ Division.³⁶

The best modern work of land warfare in the South Pacific omits mention of 3NZ Division.³⁷ Indeed, the general tendency of American authors is to omit mention of 3NZ Division.³⁸ An exception is James Christ's study of USMC operations on Choiseul, contemporaneous with Goodtime.³⁹ A comprehensive 'geo-military' study of the South Pacific by Gordon L. Rottman provides a useful background to the combat operations of 3NZ Division.⁴⁰ However, there are no modern works which examine the amphibious operations of 3NZ Division in detail or which attempt an analysis of the effectiveness of those operations.

³⁰ Samuel Eliot Morison, History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, Volume VI Breaking the Bismarcks Barrier, 22 July 1942-May 1944, Edison, NJ: Castle Books, 2001.

³¹ John S. Miller, Cartwheel: The Reduction of Rabaul, Harrisburg, PA: National Historical Society, 1993.

³² Henry I. Shaw and Douglas T. Kane, Isolation of Rabaul – History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II, Volume II, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1963; John Rentz, Marines in the Central Solomons, Washington: USMC, 1952; and Bougainville and the Northern Solomons, Nashville: Battery Press, 2001.

³³ Jeter A. Isely and Philip A. Crowl, The US Marines and Amphibious War – Its Theory and Practice in the Pacific, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951.

³⁴ John A Lorelli, To Foreign Shores – US Amphibious Operations in World War II, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1995. Lorelli mistakenly refers to the 'Desert Veterans of 8 Brigade Group' on p.157.

³⁵ George Carroll Dyer, The Amphibians Came To Conquer: The Story of Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner, (2 vols) Washington: US Government Printing Office, 1972.

³⁶ Glenn Wahlert, Australian Army Amphibious Operations in the South West Pacific, 1942-45, Canberra: Army Doctrine Centre, Department of Defence, 1985.

³⁷ Eric Bergerud, Touched by Fire – the Land War in the South Pacific, New York: Penguin, 1994. He was aware of 3NZ Division but publishing constraints and limitations of space led to a decision to omit it. Email, Eric Bergerud 13 August 2001, Author's Collection.

³⁸ Brian Altobello, Into the Shadows Furious – the Brutal Battle for New Georgia, Novato, CA: Presido Press, 2000. 14 Brigade's role on Vella Lavella is totally ignored.

³⁹ James Christ, Mission: Raise Havoc, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2006.

⁴⁰ Gordon L. Rottman, World War II Pacific Island Guide – A Geo-Military Study, London: Greenwood Press, 2002.

The conditions under which New Zealand soldier served in World War II have been covered by John McLeod, but he gives conditions in the Pacific only passing mention.⁴¹ The twelve unofficial Third Division histories provide the best material on this aspect.⁴² A book of cartoons published in 1945 also sheds laconic light on the subject.⁴³ The official histories dealing with medical aspects show what a deadly and unpleasant environment 3NZ Division operated in.⁴⁴ One book that does deal with the Division's garrison role on Norfolk Island is a history by Gilbert Hitch,⁴⁵ while Professor Frederic Angleviel has described the Division's impact upon New Caledonia.⁴⁶ A journalist's wartime account of the Division's garrison role is set out in H.E. Lewis Priday's The War From Coconut Square.⁴⁷ There are few hints in the literature of the public disdain for 'the Coconut Bombers'. An exception is Dorman's The Green War.⁴⁸ Recent oral histories of the war in the Pacific provide insight into the Coconut Bombers' war.⁴⁹ A book on the official war artists includes works from two war artists sent to the South Pacific and the illustrations are evocative of the conditions faced by the New Zealand soldiers.⁵⁰

⁴¹ John McLeod, Myth and Reality – the New Zealand Soldier in World War II, Auckland: Heinemann Reed, 1989.

⁴² Third Division Histories Committee:

1. Stepping Stones to the Solomons, Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1946.
2. Pacific Kiwis, Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1947.
3. Pacific Pioneers, Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1945.
4. The 36th Battalion, Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1948.
5. Pacific Saga, Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1948.
6. The Gunners, Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1948.
7. Pacific Service, Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1948.
8. Shovel, Sword & Scalpel, Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1945.
9. Tanks, MMG and Ordnance, Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1947.
10. Headquarters & Communications, Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1947.
11. Base Wallahs, Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1946.
12. Story of the 34th, Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1947.

⁴³ Frank Cooze, Kiwis in the Pacific, Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1945.

⁴⁴ T. Duncan Stout, War Surgery and Medicine, Wellington: War History Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1954; Medical Services in New Zealand and the Pacific, Wellington: War History Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1958; T.V. Anson, The New Zealand Dental Services, Wellington: War History Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1960.

⁴⁵ Gilbert Hitch, The Pacific War and Norfolk Island, Norfolk Island: Published by the author, 1992.

⁴⁶ Frederic Angleviel, 'New Zealanders in New Caledonia (Necal) during the Second World War (1942-1944)' in 60 Years Ago, Wellington: The French Embassy, 2005.

⁴⁷ H.E. Lewis Priday, The War from Coconut Square – the Defence of the Island Bases in the South Pacific, Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1945.

⁴⁸ T.E. Dorman, The Green War, Christchurch: Published by the author, 1997.

⁴⁹ Megan Hutching (ed.), Against the Rising Sun – New Zealanders Remember the Pacific War, Auckland: Harper Collins, 2006; Don Taylor (ed.) Everyone's War – A Collection of Tales From World War II, New Plymouth: Zenith Publishing, 2005.

⁵⁰ Jennifer Haworth: The Art of War – New Zealand War Artists in the Field 1939-45, Christchurch: Hazard Press, 2007.

The Third Division unofficial history Headquarters and Communications describes the activities of the headquarters of the force deployed to Fiji and then 3NZ Division.⁵¹ As with all the unofficial histories it provides insight into the culture and workings of the units, but in an entirely uncritical way. John Crawford has addressed the subject of Major General Barrowclough in three works. His chapter in Kia Kaha argues that Barrowclough fought not only the Japanese but also the bureaucrats in Army HQ.⁵² His second work examines Barrowclough's combat record and overall military career.⁵³ Thirdly, Crawford has provided an entry in The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography.⁵⁴ Steve Taylor has written of Barrowclough's military and legal career.⁵⁵ There are no accounts which focus on the field-grade officers in the Solomons such as Potter, Row and Goss, the brigadiers commanding the actual combat operations. Various histories of the war in the Mediterranean attest to Barrowclough's expertise in training his men and his personal courage.⁵⁶

The works of J.L. Granatstein⁵⁷ on Canada and D.M. Horner⁵⁸ on Australia provide points of comparison with other Dominions who experienced the tensions between military professionals and their militia counterparts. The New Zealand-American relationship at a strategic level was complex and dynamic. Brian Hewson's unpublished work 'Goliath's Apprentice' describes the complexities and changing American attitudes to New Zealand forces.⁵⁹ Two works on the American Joint Chiefs of Staff describe

⁵¹ The Third Division Histories Committee Headquarters and Communications.

⁵² John Crawford 'A Campaign on Two Fronts – Barrowclough in the Pacific' in John Crawford (ed.), Kia Kaha – New Zealand in the Second World War, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp.140-162.

⁵³ John Crawford 'Major General Sir Harold Barrowclough: Leadership and Command in Two World Wars' in Glyn Harper and Joel Hayward (eds), Born to Lead?: Auckland: Exisle Publishing Limited, 2003, pp.144-183.

⁵⁴ John Crawford, 'Barrowclough, Harold Eric 1894-1972', in Claudia Orange (ed.), The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Volume Five, Auckland/Wellington: Auckland University Press/Department of Internal Affairs, 2000, pp.37-39.

⁵⁵ Steve Taylor, 'Major General the Right Honourable Sir Harold Eric Barrowclough, KCMG, CB, DSO, MC, ED', New Zealand Armed Forces Law Review, 2004, pp.20-31.

⁵⁶ Richard Humble, Crusader, London: Leo Cooper, 1997; Geoffrey Cox, A Tale of Two Battles, London: William Kimber, 1987.

⁵⁷ J.L. Granatstein, The Generals – The Canadian Army's Senior Commanders in the Second World War, Toronto: Stoddard Publishing Co. Ltd., 1993.

⁵⁸ D.M. Horner, High Command – Australia and Allied Strategy 1939-45, Canberra: George Allen and Unwin, 1982.

⁵⁹ Brian Hewson, 'Goliath's Apprentice', unpublished manuscript, Author's Collection.

how the war was viewed from the viewpoint of the American military,⁶⁰ while Eric Larrabee's volume on Franklin Roosevelt and his senior commanders provides useful information on American attitudes.⁶¹ The official American history dealing with command aspects provides background on the American-imposed command structures and strategic imperatives.⁶² A subsequent volume deals with strategic planning.⁶³ Roger Bell's work entitled Unequal Allies deals primarily with the American-Australian relationship, but touches on the New Zealand relationship in passing.⁶⁴ Christopher Thorne's examination of UK/US relationships notes the strained relationship and Australasian fears of American post-war dominance in the Pacific.⁶⁵ The official histories dealing with American-New Zealand relations tend to unduly minimise the effects of the Canberra Pact.⁶⁶

The autobiographies of two American commanders, Admiral Halsey⁶⁷ and General Vandegrift⁶⁸ mention 3NZ Division in passing, in Halsey's case mistakenly referring to the 'veterans of North Africa, Greece and Crete'.⁶⁹

On the level of personal interactions McLeod describes the theft of American gear and equipment by New Zealanders. Gillespie does not touch on this area. Christ's work on the Choiseul diversionary operation portrays a pleasant and respectful attitude between American and New Zealand soldiers.⁷⁰ Harry Bioletti's work on the Americans in New

⁶⁰ Grace Person Hayes, The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in World War II : The War against Japan, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1982; Mark A. Stoler, Allies and Adversaries – The Joint Chiefs of Staff, The Grand Alliance and US Strategy in World War II, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.

⁶¹ Eric Larrabee, Commander in Chief, London: Andre Deutsch, 1987.

⁶² Louis Morton, The US Army in World War II – The War in the Pacific – Strategy and Command: The First Two Years, Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1962.

⁶³ Maurice Matloff, Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare 1943-44, Washington: Office of Military History, 1959.

⁶⁴ Roger Bell, Unequal Allies – Australian American Relations and the Pacific War, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1977.

⁶⁵ Christopher Thorne, Allies of a Kind – The United States, Britain and the War Against Japan 1941-1945, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978.

⁶⁶ M.P. Lissington, New Zealand and the United States 1840-1944, Wellington: Government Printer, 1972.

⁶⁷ William F.Halsey and J.Bryan., Admiral Halsey's Story, New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1947.

⁶⁸ A.A. Vandegrift and Robert B. Asprey, Once a Marine, New York: W.H. Norton & Co., 1964.

⁶⁹ Halsey and Bryan, p. 175.

⁷⁰ Christ, Mission.

Zealand deals with the attitudes of both American and New Zealand soldiers towards each other and the frictions that arose in New Zealand.⁷¹

There has been little published concerning the Division's demise. The Pacific devotes a chapter entitled 'The End of the Division'.⁷² Gillespie attributes the end of the Division to a shortage of manpower. The first volume on the Italian Campaign in the official histories describes how the infusion of personnel from the disbanded 3NZ Division enabled 2NZ Division to play a role in the Allied offensives.⁷³ The official history dealing with New Zealand's war economy describes the perceived need to increase agricultural production and the process of manpowering some of the troops into the agricultural sector.⁷⁴ Raymond Callahan has stressed the political importance to Winston Churchill of Commonwealth victory in North Africa and by implication the need to retain 2NZ Division in the Mediterranean.⁷⁵ The collection of official documents charts the rise and fall of 3NZ Division.⁷⁶

The Pacific makes little comment on the significance of 3NZ Division or its legacy⁷⁷. This is unsurprising given the breadth of the official history and the fact that it was written in the immediate post-war period. No literature exists which attempts to assay the overall significance or legacy of New Zealand's land war in the South Pacific. Alison Parr's book Silent Casualties on the long-term effects on veterans of World War Two covers only veterans of the war in North Africa and Europe, but could equally apply to those in the Pacific.⁷⁸ The official medical histories deal in a matter of fact way with the casualties incurred in the Pacific but of necessity do not cover the long-term effects on health and quality of life.⁷⁹

⁷¹ Harry Bioletti, The Yanks are Coming: The American Invasion of New Zealand 1942-44, Auckland: Century Hutchinson, 1989.

⁷² Gillespie, The Pacific, pp.194-203.

⁷³ N.C. Phillips, Italy, Volume 1: The Sangro to Cassino, Wellington: Government Printer, 1957.

⁷⁴ W.T. Baker, War Economy, Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1965.

⁷⁵ Raymond Callahan, Churchill & His Generals, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2007.

⁷⁶ Documents Relating to New Zealand's Participation in the Second World War 1939-45, 3 Vols. Wellington: Historical Publications Branch, 1949, 1951, 1963.

⁷⁷ Gillespie comments that 'not until the years adjust them to their proper perspective will the Pacific Campaign be fitted correctly into its place in the global war of 1939 - 45', p 325

⁷⁸ Alison Parr, Silent Casualties: New Zealand's Unspoken legacy of the Second World War, Birkenhead: Tandem Press, 1995.

⁷⁹ Stout, War Surgery and Medicine.

My research focused on material contained at National Archives, Wellington. I examined a range of files from Cabinet papers to war diaries. The Alexander Turnbull Library provided useful primary material including photographs and oral histories. Brian Hewson generously provided me with copies of documents obtained from American archives. To supplement archival material, I sought contact with veterans by placing a request in RSA Review and received a number of responses. Veterans often referred me to other veterans.

The unofficial histories produced by the Third Division Histories Committee provided useful contemporary information. The war diaries of Major General Barrowclough and Gunner G.J. Thomas provided contemporary views from opposite ends of the military spectrum.

Chapter One of this thesis deals with the origins of 3NZ Division in the deployment of New Zealand troops to Fiji. Chapter Two shows how the troops were returned to New Zealand and formally constituted as 3NZ Division, albeit chronically understrength. Despite the uncertainty of the Division's mission it was then deployed into the South Pacific. Chapter Three examines the command style of its principal commander, Major General H.E. Barrowclough. Chapter Four describes the combat operations of the Division. Chapter Five describes the complex relationship between New Zealanders and Americans and how this impacted on 3NZ Division. Chapter Six covers the factors which ultimately led to the disbandment of the Division. Chapter Seven describes the conditions faced by the troops deployed into the South Pacific. Chapter Eight examines the significance and legacy of the Division. Chapter Nine describes the conclusions drawn from these chapters.

It will be shown that the deployment of New Zealand soldiers to Fiji arose as a result of the need to garrison a strategically vital point. The development of 3NZ Division and its return to the South Pacific was a complex process dogged by uncertainty as to its mission and vacillations on the parts of politicians and military leaders as to whether it should be committed to combat. One of the major influences on the use of 3NZ Division was Barrowclough and it will be contended that his leadership ensured the Division reached the level of training necessary for combat operations. Working with the Americans was truly complex, with both Wellington and Washington providing

mixed and changing messages to each other. However, despite strains at a number of levels, the relationship was generally symbiotic and benefited both nations. The combat operations of the Division were complex affairs and contributed positively to Allied Victory in the Solomon Islands. The question of whether 3NZ Division was acting in the interests of Imperial strategy or New Zealand policy is a complex one. It was certainly acting in the direct defence of New Zealand by engaging the Japanese threat in the Solomon Islands, yet it fell victim to New Zealand's policy of collective defence with its emphasis on aiding Britain. The process of the disbandment of the Division was as complex as its creation. New Zealand manpower was over-committed as by the fifth year of the war New Zealand could not sustain two Divisions and 3NZ Division was disbanded, in part to revitalise 2NZ Division. The troops of 3NZ Division had to contend with often atrocious conditions made harder by their garrison role. Their reward has been an undeserved obscurity with little in the way of direct legacies.

CHAPTER 1: FIJIAN GENESIS

Despite acute shortages of manpower and equipment, New Zealand deployed soldiers in the South Pacific in World War II. Unlike 2NZ Division they were committed to the direct defence of New Zealand rather than sent to distant theatres under British command.¹ New Zealand was involved in two types of defence, one in the Middle East supporting the Commonwealth's principal theatre of war, where its troops were supplied from British stocks, and the second in Fiji and Tonga, where its troops were supplied from New Zealand in a largely inadequate fashion. There was to be a constant tension between the needs of Commonwealth and local defence.² This chapter will address the origins of the Pacific deployment in the initial commitment of garrison troops to Fiji in 1940.

By World War I the challenge of German seapower had forced the Royal Navy to concentrate its forces in the North Sea. This was counter-balanced in the Far East by the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902 and Japanese warships proved useful allies in the Great War,³ but the British Empire's strategic nightmare of simultaneous threats in Europe and the Far East developed in the 1930s. The problem was exacerbated by the Washington Naval Conference 1921-22, which reduced the relative size of the Royal Navy, limited the ability of the British to fortify their possessions in the Pacific, and ended the Anglo-Japanese Alliance.⁴ War weariness, economic problems, and an aversion to military spending contributed to a decline in British military power,⁵ while

¹ Both New Zealand military strategists and politicians were obliged to think in terms of imperial defence and local defence. If Britain fell then New Zealand's position would be invidious. See Archives NZ, EA1, 156/2/1, Imperial Conference 1937, Paper No. 3, Navy.

² Archives NZ, 156/2/1 Imperial Defence Conference 1937, 12 March 1937. Naval Secretary to Minister of Defence: 'There is a natural tendency to devote more attention to the problem of local defence and to neglect the fact that defeat in the main theatre of operations spells dangerous insecurity for New Zealand'.

³ David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie, *Kaigun*, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1997, pp.168-169. The Japanese seized German territories in Micronesia in November 1914 extending the Japanese Empire uncomfortably close to Australasia. Japanese troops played a key role in suppressing a Sepoy Mutiny in Singapore in 1915. See Colin Smith, *Singapore Burning*, London: Viking Books, 2005, pp.8-11.

⁴ Erik Goldstein and John Maurer (eds), *The Washington Conference 1921-22*, Ilford: Frank Cass, 1994.

⁵ Corelli Barnett, *The Collapse of British Power*, London: Eyre Methuen 1972. Even more strategic areas of the British Empire lacked defences in the early war years. For example, Malta, in 1940, had only 5,500 infantry, 14 coastal defence guns, 16 AA guns and 4 obsolete biplanes for its defence. It was extremely vulnerable to a determined Italian assault at the time of Italy's entry into the war on the Axis side. This, despite Malta lying astride critical British lines of communication through the Mediterranean. Douglas Porch, *The Path to Victory*, New York: Random House, 2004, pp.40-42. See also Archives NZ EA1, 81/4/3-3 COS Paper 74, Appendix A, SSDA to GG NZ, 18 January 1941 addressed the issue of

the rise of fascism focused British attention on Europe and the Mediterranean,⁶ resulting in further weakness in the Far East and Pacific.⁷

British Pacific strategy centred on the creation of a naval base at Singapore.⁸ The Royal Navy lacked capital ships for an effective Far Eastern Fleet and therefore relied on a strategy whereby they would be despatched from other theatres if war with Japan threatened. 'War Memorandum (Eastern)' contemplated the Royal Navy then forcing the Japanese into a decisive battle in the South China Sea.⁹ The Singapore Base would allow it to deploy successfully a smaller fleet against the Japanese far from their home bases.¹⁰ The Australasian governments contributed troops, equipment and money to the base,¹¹ which became the symbol of British power in the Far East.¹² There were some inherent weaknesses in the strategy. The estimated 60-90 days before the fleet relieved Singapore introduced a window of vulnerability. Similarly, it was unclear how many ships (if any) could be despatched and what they could accomplish.¹³ The Australasian Governments accepted the Singapore Strategy, but they urged Britain to strengthen its position in the Far East. The Far East was their 'Near North' and they were extremely

'providing some form of fixed defence for relatively isolated parts throughout the Empire' and concluded that 'a relatively low scale of defence should prove an effective deterrent' against raiders, that guns were in short supply and 'to bear in mind the claims of other places in the Empire including, moreover, the defence of the United Kingdom itself.'

⁶ Porch, p.26.

⁷ Paul M. Kennedy, The Rise and Fall of British Naval Mastery, London: Allen Lane, 1976, p.292. '... in the late 1930's Britain's strategical obligations in the Far East were tacitly abandoned'. Kennedy concludes that '... even before the outbreak of war, the Far East had been abandoned - although this was never spelt out so plainly to Australia and New Zealand.'

⁸ W. David McIntyre, The Rise and Fall of the Singapore Naval Base 1919-1942, London: Macmillan, 1979.

⁹ Andrew Field, Royal Navy Strategy and Tactics in the Far East 1919-1939, London: Frank Cass, 2003. See also Christopher M Bell, The Royal Navy, Sea Power and Strategy Between the Wars, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000. Bell points out that the Royal Navy in the inter-war years had a number of defensive and offensive plans and that to refer to a 'Singapore Strategy' is overly simplistic.

¹⁰ Arthur J. Marder, Mark Jacobsen and John Horsfield, Old Friends, New Enemies - The Royal Navy and the Imperial Japanese Navy; Volume Two - The Pacific War 1942-1945, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, p.545. The Singapore strategy was sold to the New Zealand Government on the basis that 'even an inferior British Fleet at Singapore would have the effect of preventing an invasion of Australia and New Zealand' because of Japanese logistical difficulties combined with the threat of a counterstroke. Archives NZ EA1, 156/2/1 Imperial Conference 1937 – Paper No 3 - Navy .pp.2-3.

¹¹ New Zealand made substantial monetary contributions to the cost of creating the base. Australia contributed a division, 5 squadrons of aircraft and a destroyer but no funds. Australia did, however, base its defence position on the Singapore Strategy. McIntyre, p.xi.

¹² Greg Kennedy, 'Symbol of Imperial Defence - The Role of Singapore in the British and American Far Eastern Strategic Relations 1933-41', p.42-67, in Brian Farrell and Sandy Hunter, (eds), Sixty Years On - The Fall of Singapore Revisited, Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 2002, p.vii.

¹³ Bell, pp.93-95. Bell comments that 'By the mid 1930's the real question for British planners was whether they could send the ships required for an offensive strategy, or only enough for a defensive one', p.93.

mindful of growing Japanese military power.¹⁴ Faced with inadequate resources, the British response to their concerns became a confused mixture of indecision, wishful thinking, miscalculation and even duplicity.¹⁵

Since 1840 New Zealand had been cocooned by the Royal Navy and had faced only the limited threat of naval raiders, dealt with by developing coastal defences.¹⁶ The threat from Japan in the 1930s was of a totally different order. New Zealand was increasingly anxious about its vulnerability to invasion and the need to protect its northern approaches.¹⁷ Fiji, Tonga, New Caledonia and Norfolk Island were perceived as vital to New Zealand security,¹⁸ and their defence needs were to play a key role in the development of 3NZ Division. New Zealand had long had such concerns.¹⁹ Prime Minister Seddon had lobbied Whitehall to assert sovereignty over Pacific territories,²⁰ and Wellington was greatly concerned when Germany acquired Western Samoa in 1900.²¹ In 1914 both Dominions seized German Pacific territories and Von Spee's Asiatic Squadron called into Apia to find it had been taken by New Zealand troops.²² In 1919 a review by Lord Jellicoe highlighted the importance of Fiji for New Zealand.

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¹⁴ As Chancellor of the Exchequer, Neville Chamberlain argued for a rapprochement with Japan as a solution. This was rejected by his colleagues, not least because of the likely negative effect on relations with the United States. Chamberlain felt the Americans could not be counted upon and favoured appeasement of the Japanese. Ian Kershaw, Fateful Choices: Ten Decisions that changed the World 1940-1941, New York: Penguin Press, 2007, p.192.

¹⁵ As Christopher Thorne comments, 'the assurances given to Australia and New Zealand at the Imperial Conference of 1937 (even if Germany and Italy were to join in a war against Britain, they were told, 'no anxieties or risks in the Mediterranean ... can be allowed to interfere with the despatch of a fleet to the Far East'), and again in 1939 ('it is our full intention to despatch to the Far East a fleet of sufficient strength to make the position of any Japanese major expedition precarious') were, to put it mildly, less than frank.' Christopher Thorne, Allies of a Kind - The United States, Britain and the War Against Japan 1941-1945, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978, p.35.

¹⁶ Ian McGibbon, The Path to Gallipoli, Wellington: GP Books, 1991, pp.68-84.

¹⁷ In Parliament on 17 August 1936 Colonel Hargest had described the Pacific Islands as being New Zealand's frontier and one best protected by deployment of Australasian air power across a line stretching from New Guinea to Fiji, Samoa and the Cook Islands. W. David McIntyre, New Zealand Prepares for War, Christchurch: The Caxton Press, 1988, p.189.

¹⁸ Archives NZ, Air 101, 1 COS 6, ONS Report, 6 May 1938.

¹⁹ Governor George Grey had urged Britain to annex Fiji and Tonga and recommended the seizure of Tahiti if war occurred with France. Bernard K. Gordon, New Zealand Becomes a Pacific Power, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960, p.10.

²⁰ McGibbon, p.140; Gordon, p.19.

²¹ Michael Field, Mau, Wellington: AH & AW Reed Ltd, 1984, pp.25-6.

²² *Ibid*, pp.14-15.

²³ He noted the convergence of shipping lanes on Suva. Glen St. John Barclay, A History of the Pacific, London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1978, p.170.

Whitehall was not reluctant to share its defence responsibilities. As early as 1929 the Committee of Imperial Defence asked New Zealand to garrison Fanning Island and in 1930 Wellington agreed to do this when requested by Whitehall or when war seemed imminent.²⁴ In 1936 the British Overseas Defence Committee recommended that New Zealand should take over the defence of Fiji.²⁵ In December 1938 a report from the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff (NZCOS) to the New Zealand Government stated that the Japanese fleet of fast liners had increased,²⁶ that Japan had developed amphibious capabilities and that Japanese vessels had been observed in Fijian and Tongan waters clearly involved in intelligence gathering. The NZCOS postulated that if the Japanese established a base in Fiji or Tonga, they could cut strategic lines of communication and threaten Australasia. They recommended that the Fiji Defence Force be increased to 1,300, that Suva be defended by two 6 inch guns and that if war broke out with Japan, New Zealand should despatch an infantry brigade and aircraft to Fiji. They suggested that New Zealand should store part of its strategic reserves of fuel and munitions in Fiji and Tonga, and that Tonga should raise a battalion of troops for its own defence.²⁷ The report was accepted by the New Zealand Defence Council.²⁸

Concerns about its defence led New Zealand to host the Pacific Defence Conference at Wellington in April 1939, attended by government and military representatives from Britain, Australia and New Zealand. The British reiterated their belief that, properly reinforced, Singapore would repel a Japanese seaborne invasion. To seize Australasia, the Japanese would have to penetrate the barrier of the New Guinea, Solomon Islands, New Hebrides, Fiji and Tonga Islands, and the Conference concluded that patrol aircraft could provide a warning of Japanese intentions. Accordingly New Zealand was tasked

²⁴ McIntyre, New Zealand Prepares, p.12.

²⁵ This, however, entailed a number of complex factors - political, economic and military. Fiji was a British Crown Colony with a Governor, a limited defence and police force and was economically controlled by Britain. These factors would eventually be overcome by negotiations at a high level politically and militarily between the New Zealand and the British Governments. See 'Defence of British Possessions in the South West Pacific - Assumption of Responsibility by New Zealand', 18 December 1941, Archives NZ, EA1, 86/1/1 Defence of the Pacific.

²⁶ 'The Japanese gave a practical demonstration in 1931 of their ability to embark two divisions of 20,000 men each in a period of perfect peace and to land them without any previous notice or warning whatsoever'. Archives NZ, EA1, 156/2/1 Imperial Conference 1937 Paper No 3, p.6 12 March 1937.

²⁷ Archives NZ AD MO 7/3 Part 1 - 16th Meeting of Chiefs of Staff December 1938

²⁸ McIntyre, New Zealand Prepares, p.203.

with aerial patrols of Tonga, Fiji and the New Hebrides, while the Australians were responsible for New Guinea, and the Solomons through to the New Hebrides.²⁹

The Conference endorsed the 1938 Report of the NZCOS and New Zealand was recommended to supply rifles, webbing and expert personnel for Fiji and Tonga. In addition, the New Zealand Army should be expanded and a platoon despatched to Fanning Island in the event of the likelihood of war.³⁰ It was also recommended that Fiji required at least a brigade group from New Zealand and one should be formed. This was an important step towards the formation of 3NZ Division. However, New Zealand did not have an industrial infrastructure to produce large quantities of arms and munitions. Given the demands of the British Army for re-equipment, and shipping difficulties, a significant delay in meeting orders in Britain was anticipated. New Zealand was simply told to develop its own armaments industry, a pious hope in the short term.³¹

Wellington accepted the recommendations of the Conference and set about trying to implement them. A detachment of infantry left New Zealand on 30 August 1939 for Fanning Island³². However, it was not to provide a brigade group to Fiji until late in 1941. Financing defence was also a problem. In April 1939, Britain's Defence Secretary Chatfield declined a New Zealand application for a defence loan on the basis that New Zealand defence was not a high priority.³³

On 3 September 1939 New Zealand and Britain declared war on Germany and the vulnerability of New Zealand's strategic situation was laid bare. For the next six years its prime military effort was in supporting British Commonwealth interests, firstly in the defence of Britain and then from late 1940 in the Mediterranean. However, with relations between the West and Japan severely strained, the NZCOS would spend an anxious three years looking northward at the pathetic state of military defence in their

²⁹ Archives NZ, EA 86/27/10, Defence of the Pacific Conference 1939, Verbatim Report of Proceedings (hereinafter 'Pacific Defence Conference').

³⁰ Fanning Island was a key point in the British Trans-Pacific Cable, and had been the subject of a visit by the German raider KMS Nurnberg at the outbreak of World War I. Exactly what a platoon of New Zealand troops armed with nothing heavier than machine guns could accomplish against an enemy cruiser or armed merchant raider invites speculation. A 6 inch gun was later installed.

³¹ Archives NZ, EA 86/27/10 Pacific Defence Conference 1939 - Report 25 April 1939.

³² Archives NZ, EA 86/5/1 Dispatch of troops to Fanning Island.

³³ Chatsfield to Ismay, 23 April 1939, TNA Public Record Office, CAB 21/497/22.

northern approaches.³⁴ Until the First US Marine Division arrived in New Zealand in 1942, the focus of Wellington's effort in the Pacific would be in the defence of Fiji and Tonga.

The development of the bomber made control over the northern approaches particularly critical.³⁵ Great developments in aircraft technology, navigation, bomb-load, range, speed and defensive armament took place in the 1920s and 1930s.³⁶ At one point some bombers could fly faster and higher than most contemporary fighter aircraft. It was widely believed that there was no defence against aerial attack, that civilian morale would crumble with the first intensive aerial bombardment and that casualties would be horrendous.³⁷

In the 1930s the Japanese had bombed Chinese cities with considerable effect,³⁸ notably at Canton in May 1938.³⁹ In 1940 and 1941 the Japanese launched deliberate terror bombing of Chinese cities to break the Chinese will to resist.⁴⁰ Aircraft such as the Mitsubishi G4M Betty, a two-engined medium bomber, had a potential range of

³⁴ An indication of how desperate matters were can be gauged by Prime Minister Fraser's report to the Secret Sessions of Parliament, especially in the immediate aftermath of the Fall of Singapore, Archives NZ EA1 81/1/3, Part 1, Secret Session - Defence Policy. See also the Scorched Earth Files EA81/1/17.

³⁵ The development of civil air routes across the Pacific had military implications and previously insignificant islands and atolls suddenly acquired strategic importance. This led to friction between the Commonwealth and the United States as sovereignty issues arose. The origins of The Pacific Defence Conference 1939 can be traced to this factor. There was a clear linkage between civil air routes and defence. J.T. Henderson, "The Evolution of New Zealand's Defence Policy 1840-1939", Wellington, Unpublished Ministry of Defence History, 1971, p.315. See also McIntyre, New Zealand Prepares, pp.195-201. In addition, Archives NZ, Air 103, 12 Pacific Air Routes, The Wimbush Report, November 1939, a survey of likely sites.

³⁶ John Buckley, Air Power in the Age of Total War, London: UCL Press Ltd, 1999, Chapter Five

³⁷ It was also thought that aerial bombardment would invariably entail the use of poison gas and that social structures would collapse. Buckley, p.14.

³⁸ As Nigel Rees recounts, after war broke out between Japan and China: 'The full force of modern Western technology was unleashed by Japan on the Chinese population. Towns and cities were indiscriminately bombed, and countless women and children died. The photographs of the carnage caused by the bombs and shells that fell on Shanghai Railway Station became iconic representations of the cruelty of the Japanese'. Nigel Rees, Horror in the East, London: BBC Worldwide Ltd, 2001, p.51.

³⁹ Mark R. Peattie, Sunburst - The Rise of Japanese Naval Air Power 1909-41, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2001, p.116. The Japanese deliberately began targeting urban centres with the aim of breaking the Chinese will to resist. In the Canton raid a flight of Japanese bombers killed 600 civilians and injured 900 others.

⁴⁰ Saburo Sakai, Samurai, New York: New English Library, 1969, p.10. Sakai describes how by adjusting fuel mixtures, propeller settings and power levels, Zero fighters were able to fly for 1,000-1200 miles non-stop. Japanese air power consisted of two arms, the Imperial Japanese Army Air Force and the Imperial Japanese Naval Air Force. The naval aircraft were relatively light but had considerable range, and efforts were made to train air crew to conserve fuel to extend their operational range.

3,000 miles.⁴¹ Compounding matters was Japanese carrier-borne air power, although its exact capabilities⁴² would not become evident until Pearl Harbor.

Operating in the Pacific, where typhoons frequently occur, navies needed secure anchorages for replenishment and shelter.⁴³ The US Navy was to develop fleet oiling and replenishment capability as the Pacific War progressed,⁴⁴ but pre-war thinking emphasised advanced bases.⁴⁵ Suva, with its harbour facilities,⁴⁶ became of considerable strategic significance, as did the ports at Tonga, Norfolk Island and Noumea.

New Zealand was now within the range of bombers on Fiji, a scant 1,100 miles north. The NZCOS in 1938 concluded that

It is therefore essential that an enemy should be prevented from establishing himself in this area and it is clear that the security of the islands is of strategic importance to New Zealand. The provision of landing grounds and other facilities for the operation of air reinforcements will be an important addition to the existing means of defence.

They added that 'Fiji should be regarded as a focal point' for initial airfield development.⁴⁷

⁴¹ The Mitsubishi GM3 Type 96 Bomber "Nell" had a range of 2,000 miles with a bomb load of 1,760 pounds; The Mitsubishi K1-21 Type 97 "Sally" had a range of 1,350 miles with a bomb load of 2,205 pounds. Robin Cross, The Bombers, London: Transworld Publishers, 1987, p.161.

⁴² Archives NZ Air, 77 f Defence of Pacific, Air Sec to Min of Defence 27 July 1939, A Memo discounted the possibility of carriers striking New Zealand because their range was 3-4,000 miles. However, the possibility of their being refueled at an island base could not be ignored.

⁴³ The Americans lost three destroyers in Typhoon Cobra on 17-18 December 1944, Irwin S Jackson, 'Trapped in a Typhoon', Naval History, December 2004, pp.50-54.

⁴⁴ Daniel K. Blewett, 'Fuel and US Naval Operations in the Pacific 1942', in Gunter Bischof & Robert L. Dupont (eds.), The Pacific War Revisited, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991, pp.57-80. Blewett argues that in 1942 American forces were chronically short of ships, facilities and fuel. Operations were limited by these constraints.

⁴⁵ Edward S. Miller, War Plan Orange, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991, p.36.

⁴⁶ Fiji was the only naval fuelling base outside the Dominion, McIntyre, New Zealand Prepares, p.211. It also was a wireless and telegram centre and had economic value. The NZ Chiefs of Staff highlighted that 'the Port of Suva contains the only reserves of oil fuel, outside Australia and New Zealand in the South Pacific and it is essential that these be safeguarded for the use of our own trade protection cruisers'. Archives NZ, EA1, 81/4/3 Pt 1, COS 15, October 1938.

⁴⁷ Archives NZ, Air 101, 1 COS 6, ONS Report considered by Cabinet 6 May 1938 and approved.

Airpower also held defensive possibilities. An invasion fleet detected at sea⁴⁸ could be bombed.⁴⁹ Alternatively, reinforcements could be airlifted to threatened points.⁵⁰ However, forward airfields were needed for effective reconnaissance patrols and bomber bases,⁵¹ and by February 1940 the building of airfields on Fiji was underway. Wellington decided also to build airfields on Tonga.⁵² However, those facilities would become a liability if captured by the enemy⁵³ and therefore needed protection by ground troops.⁵⁴ New Zealand's resources were limited, and airpower was the major reason Fiji and Tonga received so many of them.

For the First Labour Government airpower⁵⁵ had other attractions. It was seen as a cost-effective alternative to naval units, fitted in with its preference for local defence⁵⁶ and was considered to be somehow more 'defensive', less 'imperialist'.⁵⁷

Fiji was important to New Zealand from a naval point of view. The NZCOS warned against the danger to New Zealand shipping if the Japanese took one of the islands to its

⁴⁸ At the Pacific Defence Conference the New Zealand delegation had proposed radial air reconnaissance from Fiji. The British and Australians objected and instead a line of reconnaissance Port Moresby – Fiji was agreed upon. National Archives of Australia, MP1049/9 Secret and Confidential Correspondence File 1846/4/101. Head of Australian Delegation to Minister of State for Defence, 1 May 1939.

⁴⁹ The American plan for the defence of the Philippines placed great store on B-17s doing that. See Martin Caiden, *Flying Forts*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1968, pp.162-172. Likewise some British commanders saw airpower as a means to protect Singapore. Brian P. Farrell *The Defence and Fall of Singapore 1940 – 1942*, Stroud: Tempus Publishing, 2005 pp.50-51.

⁵⁰ General Franco airlifted troops from North Africa to Spain at the start of the Spanish Civil War. Antony Beevor, *The Spanish Civil War*, London: Cassell, 1999, pp.98-9.

⁵¹ American interest in Fiji arose as part of their plan to reinforce the Philippines by creating air links. The heavy B-17 bombers required longer runways with strong surfaces. John Burton, *Fortnight of Infamy – The Collapse of Allied Airpower West of Pearl Harbor*, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2006 p.53.

⁵² Archives NZ, AD 12, MO 7/3 Pt II, COS Report, 2 February 1940.

⁵³ See Alan Vick, *Snakes in the Eagle's Nest - A History of Ground Attacks on Air Bases*, Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1995. On 8 December 1941 the RAF Airfield at Kota Bahru was captured by the Japanese and on 11 December 1941 Alor Star Airfield was captured. The capture of these airfields allowed Japanese tactical air power to dominate the skies over Malaya. An example of the importance of airfields was demonstrated to New Zealanders with the capture by the Germans of Maleme Airfield on Crete on 21 May 1941. This effectively decided the Battle for Crete.

⁵⁴ Archives NZ, EA1, 81/4/3-3 COS Paper 128 Defence of Fiji 20 April 1942 described Nausori aerodrome as 'inadequately defended'.

⁵⁵ It was the Labour Government which accepted the report of Wing Commander Cochrane and proceeded to implement his recommendations (COS 567) and establish the RNZAF in 1937.

⁵⁶ The air-mindedness of the First Labour Government conflicted with Whitehall's preference for assets which enhanced Commonwealth defence based on Singapore – preference was indicated for Army, Air and Navy units particularly if they could be based at or reach Singapore. Archives NZ, EA1, 156/2/1 Imperial Conference 1937 – Paper No 3, Navy p.7.

⁵⁷ McIntyre, *New Zealand Prepares*, p.18.

north.⁵⁸ Fiji was the prime example.⁵⁹ New Zealand was heavily dependent upon shipping for trade and its interdiction would have catastrophic effects. Fiji was also a critical point for communications, with the British Trans-Pacific Cable running through Suva.⁶⁰

Maintenance of order in Fiji was a related consideration.⁶¹ There was deep official distrust of the Fijian Indian population, who were believed sympathetic to the Japanese,⁶² just as some leading members of the Indian National Congress were pro-Axis.⁶³ A New Zealand intelligence report suggested that Fijian Indian supporters of the Congress could potentially be fifth columnists and saboteurs for the Japanese.⁶⁴ New Zealand troops in Fiji were felt to be a restraint on such activities.⁶⁵

The NZCOS recognised the danger of inadequate defences in the South Pacific, but also had to consider the defence of New Zealand itself. If the forward defences⁶⁶ in the

⁵⁸ The NZ Chiefs of Staff were concerned that New Zealand would face surface raiders and submarines, matters being exacerbated if the Japanese were able to capture a base. 'Once the islands have passed into enemy hands their recapture would be a difficult operation, and they might well remain as a constant annoyance to us until the conclusion of the war'. Archives NZ, EA1, 81/4/3, Part 1, COS 15, October 1938.

⁵⁹ Archives NZ, EA 81/4/3 COS, 18 December 1938.

⁶⁰ This would be particularly so if the Mediterranean cable had already been severed.

⁶¹ Matthew Gubb, 'The Military Role of Australia and New Zealand in the South Pacific', a subthesis submitted for the degree of Master of Arts (Strategic Studies) in the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Research School of Pacific Studies, The Australian National University, Canberra, May 1990. Gubb argues that the two strategic imperatives of Australia and New Zealand are strategic denial to ensure that the areas to their north remain in friendly hands and, secondly, maintenance of order.

⁶² A veteran recorded his impression in 1942 that the Indians 'never accepted us, casting their eyes down as we passed, then spitting on the ground behind us'. They were suspected 'of passing information back to India and then on to Japan'. Forbes Greenfield, NZEFIP, A Gunner in the Pacific 1939-1944 <http://riv.co.nz/rnza/tales/greenfield/htm>. Forbes Greenfield Narrative, Author's Collection.

⁶³ One form of Indian nationalism manifested itself in the Indian National Army which fought alongside the Japanese. See Peter Ward Fay, The Forgotten Army - India's Armed Struggle for Independence 1942-1945, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995. It should be noted, however, that the bulk of Slim's 14th Army which defeated the Japanese in Burma were Indian.

⁶⁴ It is difficult to assess the level of support for the Axis, but it is clear that the Fijian Indian community did not wholeheartedly support the Allied war effort. The Fijian Indian population was roughly the same as that of the native Fijian population (98,600 Indians, 104,000 Fijians) but whereas the Fijians provided over four infantry battalions, the Fijian Indians provided only fifty men for a transport unit based in Suva. Rottman notes that 'The Indian population refused to serve in the local armed forces because they were offered lower wages and conditions than Europeans', but this does not explain the disparity of contribution between the two communities. For the Allies, internal security was a significant consideration and the perception was that the Fijian Indian community was a potential threat. Gordon L. Rottman, World War II Pacific Island Guide - A Geo-Military Study, London: Greenwood Press, 2002, p.96.

⁶⁵ Archives NZ, EA 86/1/1, Defence of the Pacific, Intelligence Report, 1 July 1941.

⁶⁶ Arguably the concept of 'forward defence' could have been used to justify a significant military commitment by New Zealand to the defence of Singapore. In April 1939 the NZCOS had recommended

Islands fell or were bypassed,⁶⁷ New Zealand would be extremely exposed. Every trained soldier or piece of military equipment sent north weakened homeland defence. Wellington had to choose how many resources to devote to forward defence, how many to retain in New Zealand and how many to send overseas in support of the Commonwealth's war effort. They attempted to deal with this situation in a number of ways. Firstly, reserves were called up and many officers who were physically unfit or over-age were posted overseas. Secondly, reinforcements for 2NZ Division were diverted to Fiji. Thirdly, negotiations were undertaken with the Americans and British regarding the defence of Fiji. Finally, Fijian soldiers were trained. Ultimately, however, it would be the resources of the Americans and their naval mastery in the Pacific that would secure Australasia.

On 3 September 1939 the defences of Fiji were virtually non-existent. Although Suva had an excellent harbour and Fiji had airfields, there were only a few ill-trained volunteers and no coastal artillery or anti-aircraft guns.⁶⁸ New Zealand reacted slowly to this vulnerability by despatching piecemeal groups of specialists and soldiers initially known as 'B-Force'. As relations with Japan worsened, New Zealand committed more troops, but they were initially ill-trained and ill-equipped and had few facilities. The force would eventually rise to two brigades and in early 1942 would be referred to informally as '3 NZ Division'. The beginnings of 3NZ Division can therefore be traced to the force deployed to Fiji in a situation of crisis - a veritable rabbit out of the strategic hat.

that the NZ Army 'could best contribute by providing a battalion to relieve a British unit at Singapore ...', McIntyre, New Zealand Prepares for War, p.206. Archives NZ, EA 81/4/3-1 COS Paper 22, Comments on the Paper on Imperial Defence, 4 April 1939. Fortunately, this did not eventuate and New Zealand's contribution was limited to a fighter squadron and airfield construction unit. However, whilst the Singapore strategy appeared viable it had the effect of making the defence of the Pacific Islands appear only of secondary importance.

⁶⁷ Fraser alluded to this later stating that if Japan seized 'sheltered waters such as Bay of Islands or Marlborough Sounds I do not, repeat not, regard capture of Fiji or New Caledonia as essentially a condition precedent to invasion of New Zealand. In any case I cannot agree that Fiji or New Caledonia affect the scale of attack against which NZ must prepare as in the event of their capture it would be too late to make increased preparations. At the same time I regard both places as highly important advanced bases for enemy and Allies and requiring strongest possible defences', Archives NZ EA1, 81/4/3-3 Appendix C to COS Paper 125, .PMNZ to NZ Minister, Washington 28 February 1942.

⁶⁸ On 3 September 1939 the Fiji Defence Force consisted of one Territorial Battalion (i.e., militia) and Force Headquarters with many senior officers also being Police officers. R.A. Howlett, The History of the Fiji Defence Forces 1939-45, Christchurch: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1948, pp.13-15.

In late September 1939, in a move symbolic of Fiji's defence situation, HMS Leander made a high-speed trip from New Zealand to Suva to deliver dummy guns. These were eventually replaced by real 4.7 inch guns in December 1939.⁶⁹ Requests had been made to London⁷⁰ for 6 inch guns but none was available. The Suva Battery was formed in November 1939, with the assistance of New Zealand artillery officers. However, it was recognised that a modern cruiser could easily outrange it.⁷¹ To protect against surprise land assaults, the Fijian Defence Force (FDF) was built up with specialist New Zealand Army personnel,⁷² but it was considered inadequate and ill-trained, with NCOs unlikely to fulfil their role as leaders.⁷³ Accordingly, 10 members of the New Zealand Army were seconded to the Battery. Its performance improved,⁷⁴ but Fiji's defences remained critically weak.

If Fiji was so strategically vital, why had it been left so vulnerable? New Zealand had maintained a minuscule army,⁷⁵ which was under-equipped and under-manned with no reserves to spare for forward defence.⁷⁶ Additionally, it lacked the capacity to train and equip soldiers en masse.⁷⁷ The First Labour Government, elected in 1935, viewed the military suspiciously,⁷⁸ some even fearing that it might stage a coup.⁷⁹ Labour had

⁶⁹ Howlett, pp.13-15.

⁷⁰ The New Zealand Chiefs of Staff considered that Fiji would be the most likely objective of the Japanese in the event of war. Fiji with its cable and oil fuel supplies at present totally undefended, presents the most likely objective. Archives NZ EA1, 81/4/3 (Part 5) Chiefs of Staff, COS 22, 4 April 1939.

⁷¹ In World War I German cruisers such as the KMS Emden had bombarded ports and facilities in the Pacific. In the Second World War armed merchant raiders such as the Orion carried out a similar function. Nauru was subjected to naval bombardment in 1940.

⁷² A New Zealand Army officer and four NCOs were seconded to the FDF and arrived in Suva on 6 October 1939 and set up an officers training course for 1 Bn FDF. This was the start of a long association between the FDF and NZ Army, Archives NZ, WAI, Series 1, D238/3/16.

⁷³ Archives NZ, AD MO 7/3, Pt. II. A report to Army HQ in December 1939 was sceptical as to the effectiveness of the FDF.

⁷⁴ Archives NZ, AD MO 7/3 Part II Letter 11 March 1940

⁷⁵ Although NZ had 1,134 Permanent Force soldiers in 1920, this had shrunk to 282 in 1932 and had then risen to 578 in 1939. The Territorial Force had numbered 31,475 in 1920, had declined to 3,589 in 1931 and risen to 10,364 in 1939. See McIntyre, New Zealand Prepares, Appendix A3, p.262.

⁷⁶ The Report of British Major General Piers Mackesy, in May 1939, on the state of the New Zealand Army laid bare its paucity of manpower, the lack of a formed regular unit, over-age officers and the lack of training. McIntyre, New Zealand Prepares, pp.233-5.

⁷⁷ Barclay, p.179. In 1939 New Zealand did not have the facilities to train more than one intake of soldiers at a time. Those already trained would have to be sent overseas to make room for the next body enlisted.

⁷⁸ Walter Nash described the first Labour Government as generally very anti-military in their views but they had been compelled to realise the dangers with which they were faced. Archives NZ EA 85/1/1 Pt 1, New Zealand Defence Policy Paper COS 527, 16 March 1937.

embraced the concept of collective defence within the League of Nations framework, but had not embarked on a strong programme of rearmament. Only reluctantly did it accept that New Zealand's security rested with the wider defence of the Commonwealth.⁸⁰ Even then there was a focus on local defence and the prospect of an expeditionary force being despatched to Europe was the subject of intense debate.⁸¹ The Labour Government saw the local defence problem of New Zealand's northern approaches as soluble by air power and had developed air resources at the expense of ground forces that might be used in an expeditionary force.⁸²

The NZCOS did not regard large reinforcements for Fiji as urgent. In February 1940 the Governor of Fiji enquired whether a brigade group would be despatched as recommended by the Pacific Defence Conference. The NZCOS considered that although Fiji and Tonga were important, 'There is, however, not the slightest risk of this situation arising unless Japan enters the war as an enemy of the British Empire. The necessity for providing reinforcements for Fiji and Tonga does not therefore arise at present.' Paradoxically, they recognised the importance of getting forces into position because on the outbreak of war the Japanese would probably seize command of the sea, making the sending of convoys extremely risky. Demonstrating a lamentable understanding of the Japanese predilection for surprise attacks,⁸³ they considered that it was 'essential that reinforcements for Fiji should be despatched at the latest during the precautionary period when the relations between the two countries have become very strained but a state of war has not yet been reached'.⁸⁴ They also concluded that in the event of war with Japan the defence of Fiji would take priority over the needs of 2NZ Division and its reinforcements would instead be sent to Fiji.

⁷⁹ The role of the Spanish Army under Franco's Nationalists 1936-39, would no doubt have deepened such fears. See also McIntyre, *New Zealand Prepares*, pp.169-170, and John A. Lee Papers, Series 21 Notebook F. Entry 7 November 1939, Auckland Public Library.

⁸⁰ McIntyre, *New Zealand Prepares*, pp.141-169.

⁸¹ J.T. Henderson, 'The Defence of New Zealand - A Theoretical Approach to the Study of the Formulation and Substance of New Zealand Defence Policy 1935-1943', Master of Arts Thesis, University of Canterbury, 1971, pp.59-70. See also Archives NZ, AD1, 209/1/3-1 Col. OH Mead to All Commands, 19 November 1936. Mead advised that the Army's role was 'providing primarily for local defence in New Zealand.'

⁸² McIntyre, *New Zealand Prepares*, pp.172-3.

⁸³ Surprise attacks were the standard Japanese way of beginning a war - Sino-Japanese War 1894, Russo-Japanese War 1904, the seizure of Manchuria 1931 and even the Sino-Japanese War 1937. The Japanese fought under their own Eastern way of war where surprise attacks were meritorious and even expected if the enemy had let their guard down.

⁸⁴ Archives NZ, EA 81/4/3-2, COS Paper 37, Despatch of Brigade Group to Fiji, 23 February 1940.

After the fall of France in June 1940⁸⁵ the NZCOS decided that it was necessary to send an infantry brigade to Fiji.⁸⁶ On 22 July 1940 they arranged for 300 New Zealand Engineers to be sent to there. They then examined the defences of Tonga. Their subsequent report⁸⁷ reflected concerns on the deteriorating state of the war against Germany and the heightened risk of Japanese involvement. The Singapore strategy was becoming increasingly problematic⁸⁸ but they hoped that the Japanese would not attack because they were still mired in China, and the Soviet Union and the United States were potential adversaries. They anticipated that any Japanese attack on Fiji would be at the level of one brigade. Even on that level they considered it vital to improve Fiji's defences. They proposed that three New Zealand infantry battalions be stationed on Viti Levu with a battery of New Zealand field artillery. The FDF should be mobilised,⁸⁹ coast-watching stations set up and make-shift mines laid. To provide unity of command they proposed that the commander of New Zealand forces in Fiji should command all land forces in Fiji, Tonga and Fanning Island. It was suggested that a combined operations headquarters be established in Suva for intelligence collection and analysis.

Tonga also needed resources. In 1940 its defenders consisted of 357 personnel lacking in equipment and training. The NZCOS recommended that the Tongan Defence Force be increased to 480, leavened with experienced New Zealand personnel, and trained.⁹⁰ Tonga, with its good anchorages and airfield, was critical to the defence of both Fiji and

⁸⁵ The unexpected collapse of France altered the strategic landscape not only in Europe but also in Asia and the South Pacific. The defence needs of French Polynesia which opted to join the Free French meant that there were additional calls on scarce Australasian defence resources. Archives NZ EA 81/4/3-3 COS Paper No 102. The Defence of French Oceania 29 October 1941.

⁸⁶ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, S28/3 Vol. 1 - 46th Meeting Chiefs of Staff.

⁸⁷ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, S28/3, Vol. 1 - Chiefs of Staff Report, 30 July 1940.

⁸⁸ Churchill to Fraser, 14 June 1940, Documents Relating to New Zealand's Participation in the Second World War 1939-45, Vol.III, Wellington: Historical Publications Branch, 1963, p.206, Churchill admitted that it was 'most improbable that we could send adequate reinforcements to the Far East. We should therefore have to rely on the United States of America to safeguard our interests there'. Furthermore, it was proposed on 17 June 1940 by the Director of Military Operations and plans at the War Office that the Dominions should instead of sending troops to Britain that they deploy them locally. Farrell, p.61.

⁸⁹ At this point it was still operating on a territorial basis and consisted of 42 officers and 1,029 men. Ironically, Europeans were volunteering for service in the New Zealand Army thereby denuding local forces. It was agreed these enlistments would be declined.

⁹⁰ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, S28/3 Vol. 1 - Chiefs of Staff Report, 30 July 1940.

New Zealand, but also constituted another call on New Zealand's limited military resources. Western Samoa, likewise, was inadequately garrisoned.⁹¹

The obvious answer to the need for troops was to use the reinforcements for 2NZ Division. In February 1940 the NZCOS had presumed this would happen.⁹² However, by 7/8 December 1941 New Zealand troops were desperately needed in the Middle East and those about to be sent were a crucial part of 2NZ Division. Wellington was also mindful that the Middle East⁹³ was considered vital for Britain, particularly for oil supplies. Eventually the Third Echelon was despatched to the Middle East, but other reinforcements were diverted to Fiji. These troops, numbering 3,050, were formed into a brigade group that was initially known as 'B' Force⁹⁴ and later became known as '8 Infantry Brigade Group'.⁹⁵ It became the foundation of 3NZ Division.

The deployment remained so inadequate as to be an invitation to disaster. Any garrison Wellington could have provided would still have been reliant upon a friendly navy maintaining maritime dominance in the South Pacific. If naval or aerial dominance were lost, even the strongest garrisons could be reduced to impotence, as the Japanese on Rabaul 1943-45 would discover. Arguably, New Zealand's commitment to defending its northern ramparts was inadequate and strategically risky.⁹⁶ However,

⁹¹ In January 1942 the Americans were appalled to discover that Western Samoa had a garrison of only 157 New Zealanders. Its weakness threatened to undermine American efforts to secure the South West Pacific. On 20 March 1942 a New Zealand-US Agreement vested defence responsibility for Samoa in the United States. H.P. Willmott, *The Barrier and the Javelin*, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1989, pp.149-150.

⁹² Archives NZ, EA1 81/4/3-2, NZ COS Paper 37, 23 February 1940, Despatch of a Brigade Group to Fiji.

⁹³ The despatch of the Third Echelon exemplifies the interaction between despatching forces to Europe and deploying them to the Pacific. There was the factor of whether the New Zealand troops could be adequately armed if sent to the Middle East. There had been considerable loss of arms and equipment by the BEF and the New Zealand Government suggested to Whitehall that it would be prudent to send some of the Third Echelon to Fiji and retain the remainder in New Zealand pending an improvement in the equipment situation. Governor, Fiji to GGNZ, 28 July 1940, *Documents*, Vol. III, No. 238, p.271. There were concerns that, given the increased likelihood of war with Japan, the despatch of the Third Echelon would leave New Zealand without adequate troops and weapons and the risk of transporting the troops overseas increased with a lower level of naval escort. Strategic considerations outweighed these factors.

⁹⁴ A-Force had been despatched to Fanning Island in 1939.

⁹⁵ Statutory Regulations 1941/9. The title of B-Force was changed on 29 January 1941 to '8th Brigade Group Second NZEFIP' by Order in Council. The Brigade Commander was authorised by Army HQ to make temporary promotions to bring the force up to war establishment but such promotions were only to last whilst in Fiji.

⁹⁶ Australia faced similar strategic dilemmas to New Zealand and it failed to adequately garrison the strategic areas to its north preferring to deploy the bulk of its soldiers into Malaya. Consequently, Rabaul was defended only by a battalion and was easily seized by the Japanese.

there simply was no alternative. Having no garrisons could have increased the risk of a Japanese coup de main.

Colonel William Henry Cunningham was appointed from the Reserve to command the Brigade on 20 July 1940⁹⁷ and promoted to temporary Brigadier on 28 October.⁹⁸ He identified the Suva Peninsula as critical because of its airfield, port and wharf facilities, considering that three battalions would be needed, preferably with one sufficiently mobile to be a strategic reserve. Since the Brigade's engineer unit was not yet fully trained, it was decided to use some engineers - 18 A Troops Company - as the advance party.⁹⁹ It disembarked at Suva on 12 October 1940 and began the construction of facilities for the main body. The first section of 8 Brigade arrived at Suva on 1 November. A second arrived on 14 November, followed by a third on 22 November. Cunningham established a headquarters at Suva and his units began laying out barbed wire, digging weapons pits and emplacing guns. 29 Battalion was to defend the east of Viti Levu and 30 Battalion the west. Unity of command was implemented by the Governor of Fiji appointing Brigadier Cunningham Commandant of the Fiji Defence Force on 6 November. A policy of rotating troops developed¹⁰⁰ 18 A Troops Coy was embarked for New Zealand on 11 January 1941,¹⁰¹ being relieved by 20 Field Company.¹⁰²

Because Suva Harbour was strategically critical, the British provided two 6 inch guns, which arrived on 1 December 1940. Between August and November 1940 German raiders were active in the South Pacific and an attack on Fiji was expected. On 12

⁹⁷ It has been suggested that he failed the medical examination for overseas service - he had shrapnel wounds from World War I, but that Peter Fraser overrode this and approved his appointment. A similar situation to Hargest. Conversation with Brian Cunningham, October 2003.

⁹⁸ W.H. Cunningham, NZ Army Base Records, Adjutant General to Pay Accounts and Base Records, 3 December 1940. The New Zealand Army, however, continued to pay Cunningham at a Colonel's rate, despite his having an onerous and detached command, and the additional responsibility as Commandant of the FDF. The justification was that the Pay and Allowances Regulations for 2NZEF did not provide for a rate of pay higher than Colonel.

⁹⁹ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 121/1/1-6.

¹⁰⁰ The rationale being that extended service in the tropics was likely to break the health of the troops. Originally it was intended that reliefs occur on a four monthly basis but shortage of shipping and escorts led to the reliefs occurring on a six monthly basis. Archives NZ EAI/86/15/2 Pt. 4 NZ Forces Defence Fiji, COS 40, 5 June 1904. Periodical relief was urged to ensure 'that the men are not kept in a tropical climate for too long a period.'

¹⁰¹ Cunningham recommended that because of the hard work done by the engineers that they should be given leave before being sent to the Middle East, Archives NZ WA II, DAZ 121/1/7-9 App.1.

¹⁰² Archives NZ, WAI, Series 1, DAZ 131/1/1-6.

December 1940 searchlights were installed and the Suva Battery was manned around the clock. On 6 December 1940 a Japanese cargo ship failed to stop when ordered and a warning round was fired. It was later thought that the ship had provoked the fire to plot the location of the battery.¹⁰³

The continued role of Malaya to New Zealand as a form of forward defence is shown by the recommendation of the NZCOS in December 1940 that a battalion of trained territorial troops be sent there.¹⁰⁴ This would have had a disastrous effect on the formation of 2NZ Division, the garrisoning of Fiji and Tonga and home defences. On 5 February 1941 they again recommended the offer of a battalion for the defence of Singapore.¹⁰⁵ Yet when a Far East appreciation from the Australian Chiefs of Staff on 15 February 1941 commented on the uncertainty of American involvement in a war with Japan and recommended that Australian and New Zealand naval forces return to home waters, the NZCOS endorsed this.¹⁰⁶

In August 1941, a British advisor to the New Zealand Government, Lt. General Guy Williams, recommended that New Zealand take overall responsibility, expedite defence work, base a squadron of fighter bombers in Fiji,¹⁰⁷ organise coastal batteries and increase the garrison. In line with prior defence reports, Williams considered that New Zealand would be exposed only to commerce raiders or limited attack so long as Singapore held and the United States Pacific Fleet remained in existence. Williams considered New Zealand's strategic situation in the event of Singapore falling. He noted the deficiencies of the New Zealand troops in Fiji. The majority had not completed their three months basic training, while regular rotation made the creation of an effective cohesive military unit impossible. He recommended that troops should have at least three months training before arriving in Fiji and that the tour of duty should be at least a year. Williams thought that 8 Brigade's proficiency in weapon handling was low and the artillery particularly needed live firing exercises. His report

¹⁰³ Howlett, p.18

¹⁰⁴ Archives NZ, EA 81/4/3-2 ONS, COS Paper 65, Defence of Malaya, 13 December 1940.

¹⁰⁵ Archives NZ, EA1, 81/4/3-3 COS Paper 76, 5 February 1941.

¹⁰⁶ Archives NZ, EA1, 81/43-3 COS Paper 80, 27 February 1941.

¹⁰⁷ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 32/25 Memo for War Cabinet, 4 August 1941.

was accepted by the New Zealand Government¹⁰⁸ and would profoundly affect the way that it viewed Fiji's defence needs.

Nevertheless, the New Zealand Army continued with a Second Relief on 14 August 1941. Apart from some senior officers, the Brigade was again made up of new personnel with limited training, with new officers, mostly Second Lieutenants, only recently graduated.¹⁰⁹ The return of ten captains to New Zealand left subalterns as company commanders. Similarly, there were insufficient NCOs. The relief process meant that at a critical time the Brigade Group was under-trained, under-equipped, under-officered, lacking in cohesion and largely unacclimated. On the other hand, two infantry brigades had been established, equipped and deployed to Fiji, despite shipping being in short supply and German raiders disrupting New Zealand's coastal shipping.

By October 1941 war with Japan seemed increasingly likely and from being a reservoir of trained personnel for 2NZ Division, 8 Brigade's status changed to that of a frontline unit. When Cunningham returned to New Zealand, he apprised the newly appointed Chief of General Staff, Lt General Edward Puttick, of Fiji's defence needs. Promises were made that weapons and equipment, including grenades, armoured cars and mortars, would be sent, together with more soldiers.¹¹⁰

Anticipating that London would accept Williams' proposals on Wellington taking control, two New Zealand Cabinet Ministers and the NZCOS flew to Suva on 14 November 1941. Four days later an agreement was signed defining New Zealand's defence responsibilities,¹¹¹ which extended to all British territories within the New Zealand Naval Station. Another outcome was an agreement on the importance of airfield construction. The United States had indicated that it wanted to use Fiji as part of its strategic air routes to Australia and the Philippines and Wellington had agreed to enlarge Nandi Aerodrome.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ Archives NZ, EA 81/4/3-3 COS Paper 98, 15 August 1941. The COS essentially concurred.

¹⁰⁹ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 121/9/83/1

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ The agreement was executed by the NZ Minister of Defence, Fred Jones, a member of the New Zealand War Cabinet, Gordon Coates, The Governor of Fiji, Sir Harry Luke, the Colonial Secretary for Fiji, C.W.T. Johnson and the Secretary to the Western Pacific High Commission, Mr H. Vaskess, Archives NZ, AD Series 12, S28/3, Volume 3, Report, 18 November 1941.

¹¹² Archives NZ, WA II DAZ 121/1/17.

News of the attacks on Pearl Harbor and Malaya was received in Fiji on the morning of 8 December¹¹³ and New Zealand declared war that morning. At the time, New Zealand's defence deployment in the Pacific outside of Fiji, Tonga and Western Samoa consisted of coastwatchers stationed in the Gilbert and Ellis Islands, Phoenix Island, Tokelau, Line and Cook Islands, linked by wireless to a New Zealand Naval Liaison Officer in Suva. Fanning Island had a 6 inch gun and 105 New Zealand troops garrisoning it. Fiji was defended by twelve mainly obsolete military aircraft, five small patrol boats, two and a half New Zealand infantry battalions, three FDF Territorial Companies and an FDF Home Guard Company.¹¹⁴ This force was manifestly inadequate. On 8 December the New Zealand War Cabinet approved an increase in its troops in Fiji from 3,050 to 6,050,¹¹⁵ which placed a huge strain on New Zealand's extremely limited supply of shipping, manpower and equipment.

The NZCOS still considered naval raiders the main threat to Fiji. Since the Middle East was 'a vital theatre', the reinforcements for 2NZ Division should be sent there unless the Japanese attacked Fiji in force.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, because of the strategic value of Nandi Airfield, they recommended that the garrison be increased to two brigades, a squadron of bombers and a squadron of fighters, and the United States should be asked to contribute.¹¹⁷ 14 Brigade was organised and embarked within one week,¹¹⁸ its equipment obtained from training camps, the National Military Reserve and various Home Guard Units, leaving the Home Army very short of weapons and equipment. The NZCOS, however, recommended that Fiji should have precedence for equipment and

¹¹³ Due to the effects of the International Date Line, whilst the United States was attacked on December 7, the Japanese attack on Malaya took place on December 8, 1941. Similarly, Fiji was on the 8 December side of the date line.

¹¹⁴ Archives NZ, AD12, S28/3, Volume 2.

¹¹⁵ Archives NZ, EA 81/4/3-3 COS Paper No. 108, 8 December 1941.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Archives NZ, EA 81/4/3-3 COS Paper No 109, Defence of Fiji, 20 December 1941.

¹¹⁸ The experience of 37 Battalion is illustrative of the nature of the troop build-up in Fiji. 37 Battalion was formed at Burnham Camp on 29 December 1941, embarked at Lyttelton on 9 January 1942, disembarked at Wellington on 9 January 1942, was railed to Auckland and embarked on the SS Rangatira on 10 January 1942 and disembarked at Lautoka on 14 January 1942 where it was transported to its camp at the Sambeto River. There it had to build roads and assist with camp organisation for the next month. Archives NZ, WA II, DAZ 158/1/1-3. Barely two weeks had elapsed between formation and operational deployment, not enough time for the unit to have shaken itself down and begun the process of unit cohesion. This is a measure of how desperately needed troops were in Fiji in early 1942.

that New Zealand's only four anti-aircraft guns should be deployed there.¹¹⁹ They commented that 'Whereas formerly the Islands were the first line of defence for New Zealand, their retention by us is now vital, for the prosecution of war against Japan. So long as we hold the Islands, large scale operations against New Zealand are unlikely. It is therefore necessary to take all possible steps to defend those islands adequately.' They concluded that the Japanese would realise the increased importance of Fiji and were therefore likely to attack in greater numbers than estimated by Williams.¹²⁰

The hammerblows of Japanese victories profoundly shocked the Allies. Hong Kong, Guam and Wake Island fell rapidly. Successful landings took place in Malaya, Japanese aircraft dominated its skies and HMS The Prince of Wales and HMS Repulse were sunk. The Japanese decimated American air power in the Philippines and invaded the islands. MacArthur abandoned Manila and retreated to Bataan. Singapore seemed in danger. These events caused consternation in Wellington.¹²¹ In a cable to Winston Churchill, Peter Fraser indicated that although the extensions to Nandi airfield were proceeding apace, he was concerned that it could be a liability if not properly defended. Whilst New Zealand could provide a brigade, there were difficulties in equipping it, and New Zealand had stripped itself of weapons. Significantly, Fraser asked Churchill to impress on Roosevelt the strategic importance of Fiji and the chronic need for weapons. New Zealand had lost faith in the Singapore strategy.¹²²

A day later Fraser cabled the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs regretting New Zealand's inability to help defend Malaya and asking urgently for tanks and anti-tank weapons for Fiji.¹²³ The Secretary of State replied that the British Government accepted New Zealand's decision to reinforce Fiji using troops that would otherwise have been deployed to the Middle East. He also indicated that weapons would be supplied for Fiji.¹²⁴ The US Joint Chiefs of Staff advised Wellington that an attack on

¹¹⁹ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, S28/3, Meeting Chiefs of Staff, 20 December 1941. COS Paper No. 109. Also EA 81/4/3-3.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Plans were made to evacuate the War Cabinet and Chiefs of Staff from Wellington in the event of a Japanese invasion. Archives NZ, EA 81/1. COS Paper 111, 31 December 1941.

¹²² Archives NZ AD Series 12, S28/3 Cable PM NZ to PM UK, 24 December 1941.

¹²³ Archives NZ AD Series 12, S28/3 Vol. 2, Cable PM NZ to Sec. State, 25 December 1941. Given the absence of Allied tanks in Malaya, Fraser's request was completely unrealistic.

¹²⁴ Archives NZ AD Series 12, S28/3 Cables Sec. of State to PM NZ, 24 & 25 December 1941.

Fiji could be expected any time after 10 January 1942.¹²⁵ Fiji was excluded from General Wavell's ABDA Command and Fraser asked for clarification.¹²⁶ No response was received and Fraser repeated his request.¹²⁷ On 8 January 1942 Churchill responded that efforts were being made to get the Americans to take naval responsibility for the area south of the equator to the coast of Australia.¹²⁸

The decision to reinforce the garrison in Fiji highlighted New Zealand's commitment to the Middle East. On 26 December 1941 Fraser raised with Freyberg the prospect that all or part of the 8th Reinforcement would be diverted to Pacific defence.¹²⁹ Fraser indicated that there was 'no intention of ignoring our responsibility for maintaining the Middle East Forces at proper strength, though neither we nor you can disregard the possibility that events in this part of the world may greatly increase our difficulties in this respect.' On 27 November 1941 the sailing of the 8th Reinforcements to the Middle East was postponed indefinitely and a week later the 9th Reinforcements were allocated to the defence of New Zealand and Fiji. Freyberg responded that his recent 5,000 reinforcements could maintain his division until August 1942. However, it had suffered heavily in the swirling desert battles of Operation Crusader¹³⁰ and days later Rommel launched a counter-stroke that bundled the Allies back to the Gazala defences. An under-strength Division was likely to be lumped in with other composite units, to lose its influence in Allied decision making, and to be exposed to losing its national identity.

Meanwhile, reinforcements flowed into Fiji. During December, 771 soldiers arrived, bringing 34 Battalion up to full strength. Fortification work continued at a frenetic pace. Little leave was allowed. Six antique 18 pounder Field Guns were emplaced and put to a novel use as AA weapons because Fiji still lacked any AA guns.¹³¹

¹²⁵ Archives NZ Air 118, 81f Defence of the Pacific, Narrative p.19.

¹²⁶ Ibid., Fraser to SSDA, 30 December 1941.

¹²⁷ Ibid., Fraser to SSDA, 6 January 1942.

¹²⁸ Archives NZ, Air 118, 19 Defence of the Pacific, pp.3-4.

¹²⁹ Archives NZ, EA 86/1, PM NZ to Freyberg, 26 December 1941.

¹³⁰ Richard Humble, Crusader - The 8th Army's Forgotten Victory November 1941-January 1942, London: Leo Cooper, 1987.

¹³¹ An unofficial Third Division History records, 'they had their trails dug deep in miry pits. With a false setting on their 'TP 80' fuses and a false angle of sight they were prepared to provide a barrage from 4,000 ft down to 500 ft over Kings Wharf and other important objectives.' Even though their range was limited to a height of 4,000 feet shrapnel shells were fired across Suva by way of experiment. It was

Ammunition arrived in significant quantities and 35 Field Battery was put to work digging tunnels to create storage. Motor mechanics, medics, searchlight crews, and communications specialists were in short supply.

February 1942 was a bad month for the Allies as the Japanese advanced in the Philippines, completed the capture of Malaya and Singapore, invaded the Dutch East Indies, landed in New Britain, launched air raids on Darwin, and completed the destruction of Allied ships in the Battle of the Java Sea. It was uncertain where they would strike next. However, they seemed likely to exploit their newly acquired bases in the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, and coast-watchers confirmed a build-up of enemy shipping. NZ Army HQ anticipated that an attack on Fiji would occur on 8-11 February and the troops were told that air and naval attacks, even an invasion, were possible. If the Japanese established a beachhead, determined counter-attacks were to dislodge them.

The Deputy Chief of Staff, Brigadier Stewart, visited Fiji on 8 February 1942 and took command temporarily when Major General Cunningham was hospitalised. Cunningham was then replaced by Brigadier Oliver H. Mead, who arrived on 25 February. Colonel R.A. Row took over 8 Brigade and Brigadier Goss was sent for liaison duties in Australia. The title of the New Zealand Force was changed to 'Pacific Section 2NZEF'.¹³²

In late March 1942 the New Zealand Liaison Officer in London reported that the British Chiefs of Staff thought a Japanese attack on the South Pacific islands was 'almost a certainty'. Having cut New Zealand's lines of communication, they could invade it to gain a bargaining chip at later peace negotiations. The scale of any such invasion was assessed at one to two divisions with follow-on reinforcements and six or seven divisions were considered sufficient for the defence of New Zealand.¹³³

hoped that they could be used to deter low flying aircraft. The Third Division Histories Committee, The Gunners, Wellington: A.W. & A.H. Reed, 1948, p.14.

¹³² Order in Council, 25 February 1942.

¹³³ Documents, Vol. III, No. 219, NZLO London to CGS, pp. 251-254.

On 20 March the United States took responsibility for defending Western Samoa. New Zealand troops there were to be used as military police to deal with the local population, one of the first instances where New Zealand soldiers were placed under American operational command.¹³⁴ By March the Tonga Defence Force comprised 110 New Zealanders and 650 Tongans, two 4 inch guns and two 18 pounder guns. Army Headquarters decided that it should be controlled from Fiji.¹³⁵

On 12 March 1,032 reinforcements arrived in Suva.¹³⁶ However, Mead was told he should expect no more than small parties and should incorporate Fijians in New Zealand units. Mead discussed with Sir Harry Luke, the Governor of Fiji, the forming of a 3rd Fijian Infantry Battalion. The 2nd Fijian Territorial Battalion had been halved because the local Europeans had been returned to 'essential industries' by the Manpower Committee.¹³⁷ The decision was made that the 3rd Battalion of the Fijian Defence Force would be formed at Lautoka and once trained would come under the operational command of 14th Infantry Brigade. Although New Zealand officers and NCOs were to be seconded to the FDF, native Fijians were to be used to the utmost.¹³⁸

The possibility of guerrilla warfare was discussed by the New Zealand Army, the Fijian Civil Administration and Fijian Chiefs. Brigadier Potter proposed that guerrillas would create bases from which Allied troops could be reformed and used against the Japanese and that the guerrillas would gather intelligence and generally harry Japanese troops. Caches of food, weapons and explosives were to be established. It was also contemplated that Fijian guerrillas mounted on horses would be utilised on the western side of the island.¹³⁹

¹³⁴ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 121/9/B/10/5.

¹³⁵ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 121/1/21.

¹³⁶ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, AD 12, S28/3, Vol. 4 – Cable, 12 March 1942

¹³⁷ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 121/1/21

¹³⁸ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 121/9/B/3/5

¹³⁹ The fact that New Zealand officers were contemplating guerilla warfare is highly significant. The New Zealand Army had not been involved in guerilla operations and the nearest that New Zealand troops would have come to this would have been the mopping up operations against Boer 'die hard' units in the aftermath of the Boer War. The British, however, had in 1940 contemplated the prospect of German invasion and occupation and had made provision for 'stay behind' forces that would carry out hit-and-run attacks on German occupation forces and ensure the loyalty of the local population. Brigadier Gubbins had been given the task of organising such forces. M.R.D. Foot, SOE - The Special Operations Executive 1940-46, London: BBC, 1984, pp.16-17. Ultimately this experience would lead to the formation of Special Operations Executive and British involvement in equipping, funding and utilising guerilla forces on the Continent of Europe. Likewise, British forces in Malaya had carried out guerilla operations behind

Mead believed that any Japanese invasion would consist of at least one division supported by tanks and aircraft. He was also concerned that the Japanese would strike against not only Viti Levu but also other Fijian Islands, stretching Allied resources. The naval strength in Fiji was insufficient and therefore the first line of defence consisted of aircraft. The air defences of Fiji were now made up of a squadron of 24 P-39 fighter planes, 9 Hudson light bombers, 5 Vincent bombers, 3 Singapore flying boats and 3 De Havilland light planes. All of these aircraft were obsolete and would have been decimated if exposed to the full force of Japanese air power. Even the most modern American fighter available, the P-39 Airacobra was completely out-matched by the Japanese Zero.¹⁴⁰ Mead understood that he could rely on his air assets only for reconnaissance and transportation. He believed that extra brigade groups were required, and tanks were desirable, together with a motorised infantry battalion and a 25 pounder battery.¹⁴¹

On 20 April the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff told the War Cabinet that Fiji urgently required further forces. It needed at least two brigade groups and a battalion on Viti Levu and one brigade group and a battalion on Vanua Levu. Coastal artillery and anti-aircraft guns were essential, as were fighter aircraft. They concluded that the additional forces could come only from the United States or New Zealand. The Americans had indicated that their troops were to be sent to New Zealand and they did not want some sent to Fiji and the rest to New Zealand. Wellington had little option but to send further troops to Fiji. The Chiefs of Staff recommended that the serious situation be drawn to the attention of Vice Admiral Ghormley as soon as possible, and American reinforcements requested. If they refused, the Chiefs of Staff considered the situation serious enough for the New Zealand Army Reserve Brigade Group to be sent to Viti Levu. Their recommendation was approved on 22 April and Fraser cabled Walter Nash in Washington, asking him to discuss the situation with Admiral King and instructing him that he should point out that the Chiefs of Staff considered six divisions necessary

Japanese lines with great effect. Richard Gough, SOE - Singapore 1941-42, Singapore: Raffles, 1987. In the Philippines, a bitter guerilla war was to be waged against the Japanese with large areas of the Philippines under guerilla control. Robert B. Asprey, War in the Shadows, New York: William Morrow & Co, 1994, Chapter 30.

¹⁴⁰ Martin Caidin, The Rugged Ragged Warriors, New York: Bantam Books, 1979, pp.306-7, Japanese pilots preferred to meet the P-39 in combat because it was viewed as 'easy meat'.

¹⁴¹ Archives NZ, WAIL, 1, DAZ 121/9/B/10/1

for the defence of New Zealand, but only the equivalent of three divisions were available. Even though it was undesirable for New Zealand to send further troops overseas, the Cabinet approved the despatch of 2,000 additional troops to Fiji to man weapons and equipment supplied by the United States.¹⁴² United States representatives told Nash that the security of the Pacific area had to be looked at as a whole. They expected New Zealand to supply 12,000 troops to Fiji by the end of 1942.¹⁴³ Fraser replied to Nash that the War Cabinet still believed that reinforcements for Fiji should come directly from the United States. He cabled Washington:

We have recognised the importance of Fiji since the very early stages of the war - we have despatched to Fiji greater forces than we could reasonably be expected to spare, amounting to approximately a quarter of our effective strength at that time. It is only necessary, by way of example, to point out that we sent all the anti-aircraft guns, both light and heavy, that we possessed at the time. To provide 12,000 men at the present moment would cripple the defences of this Dominion. Besides, it would denude New Zealand of equipment. Even if we were to withdraw our Division from the Middle East, a lengthy period must elapse before its return would enable us to release men for Fiji. Suggest either United States or Canadian reinforcements.¹⁴⁴

The strategic situation worsened in May with the fall of Corregidor and the end of formal American resistance in the Philippines. By this time the Japanese had taken Burma and were advancing into New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. A planned Japanese amphibious operation to take Port Moresby triggered a naval battle in the Coral Sea on 7-8 May. The Japanese won a tactical victory by sinking the USS Lexington in exchange for a light Japanese carrier, but the Japanese troop convoy was prevented from carrying out its mission.¹⁴⁵ Imperial Japanese Army forces, however, still remained intact and very potent.

The Battle of the Coral Sea focused American military attention on the South Pacific. Admiral King, head of the United States Navy, told Walter Nash that Washington was

¹⁴² Archives NZ, EA S28/3 Vol. 4

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Australian National Maritime Museum, The Battle of the Coral Sea 1942, Conference Proceedings, 1992, Sydney: Australian National Maritime Museum, 1993.

now considering taking over full responsibility for the defence of Fiji and Tonga.¹⁴⁶ Fraser indicated his interest in this but considered that New Zealand troops should also stay in Fiji. When Nash told King on 8 May that New Zealand would favour the transfer of defence responsibility for Fiji and Tonga to the United States, King informed him that President Roosevelt had already approved this arrangement. Fraser was taken aback and asked Whitehall and Suva for their response.¹⁴⁷ The Governor of Fiji indicated that he had no objection in principle, but that if New Zealand forces were to leave two US Divisions would be needed. He also considered it desirable to preserve the separate identity of Fijian and Tongan units within the United States command structure.

Strategic necessity spurred developments. On 9 May King told Nash that both he and Admiral Nimitz believed that it was urgent that Fiji and Tonga should be strengthened and that this was best accomplished by the United States taking over. Nash suggested that six divisions were needed for the defence of New Zealand but King pointed out that the supply of American troops was limited and there were many demands on them. He told Nash that troopships had already been despatched to Fiji to disembark American troops and repatriate the New Zealand garrison. Nash suggested that New Zealand troops be trained for amphibious warfare provided that they could be equipped and that these soldiers could take part in later American offensives.¹⁴⁸ The following day Nash received a memo from King indicating that American troops for Fiji had been delayed, that one division had been intended for Fiji and that this would be strengthened by support personnel and anti-aircraft guns. In the meantime it was proposed that New Zealand AA guns and personnel should remain, but the United States would eventually take over operational command of Fijian Defence Forces. Fraser obtained Whitehall's approval to this proposed transfer of defence responsibilities and then indicated New Zealand's acceptance.¹⁴⁹

New Zealand Army Headquarters consequently instructed Mead to prepare camps for the American troops. He was also told that a shuttle service would be run by the USS

¹⁴⁶ The sequence of events is set out in Documents, Vol. III, pp.318-333.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, Cable, Fraser to Nash, 8 May 1942

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, Cable, Nash to Fraser, 9 May 1942.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, Cable, Fraser to Nash, 16 May 1942.

President Coolidge, returning troops to New Zealand. It was, however, vital that the garrison strength be maintained during the transfer period. Anti-aircraft and coastal units would remain in Fiji until approximately August or September.¹⁵⁰ Matters were complicated by further delays in the despatch of troops from the United States. The Americans actually requested that New Zealand send further troops to Fiji, and these arrived during May. On 12 May Fiji and the other islands in the South Pacific were placed under the command of Vice Admiral R.L. Ghormley, who inspected the Fijian defences before continuing to Auckland. In the meantime Mead took command of all forces on Fiji, the first occasion when a New Zealand military commander assumed command of American troops.

In June 1942 the Battle of Midway decimated the main Japanese carrier force, removing that threat. Although substantial Japanese surface and submarine units continued to operate, the worst had passed. Planned Japanese operations for August 1942 to seize Samoa, Fiji and New Caledonia were cancelled on 11 July 1942.¹⁵¹

The Americans proposed that they have defence responsibility of Fiji for the duration of the war and six months thereafter and Wellington agreed. Accordingly, the USN prepared an occupation plan in which a squadron of P-39 fighters was stationed there and the 37th US Division was in support. The plan also commented that 'the Hindus are not entirely loyal to the Crown and have not wholly supported the Government in the conduct of the war. Fifth Column activities may have caused severe incursions into the integrity of the various New Zealand defence forces, military, militia and civil groups. It can be expected that US troops would receive only minor co-operation from the local militia, and that the problem of internal security is one which must receive special attention.'¹⁵² Fraser instructed Nash to tell King that the comments on the integrity and morale of New Zealand troops were inaccurate. King replied that it was

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, Cable, Puttick to Mead, 13 May 1942.

¹⁵¹ Gordon Rottman, Japanese Army in World War II - Conquest of the Pacific 1941-42, Oxford: Osprey Publishing Ltd, 2005, pp.86-87. The 9,000 man Kawaguchi Detachment was to take Fiji, the 5,500 South Seas Detachment was to take New Caledonia and the 1,200 man Aboa Detachment would seize Samoa.

¹⁵² Archives NZ, EA S28/3 US Plan of Relief, May 1942.

not intended to question New Zealand white troops but that US Intelligence Reports had indicated dissatisfaction amongst the Hindus.¹⁵³

Because of the strategic importance of Fiji to New Zealand and the perception that the United States had despatched insufficient troops to garrison it, New Zealand favoured leaving its troops in Fiji. On 9 June Fraser 1942 expressed surprise to Admiral King that New Zealand troops were not to be retained. He stressed the 'no strings attached' nature of the offer because it was 'felt that these troops would be of greater value in Fiji than in New Zealand'.¹⁵⁴ However, King advised that he and General Marshall considered that 'greater service to our combined effort in the Pacific would be serviced by carrying out the present plan for their relief. The New Zealand troops thus relieved, we hope, can be made available for amphibious training with our First Marine Division in anticipation of joint offensive action to the north-west.'¹⁵⁵ It was intended that by September the Americans would have 23,000 ground and air personnel in Fiji. Fraser's believed that was still inadequate and he renewed the offer of troops.¹⁵⁶ King was adamant that the New Zealand troops be repatriated, apparently because of an American preference for homogeneity of forces and unity of command. There also seems to have been an American concern that if New Zealand troops remained, 'the New Zealand War Cabinet would subsequently feel an aching void in New Zealand and demand a further US Division for New Zealand.'¹⁵⁷ By July the two brigades had returned to New Zealand.

The deployment of New Zealand troops to Fiji, Tonga and Samoa in 1940-42 was an outgrowth of Wellington's strategic concern for its northern approaches. However, it ran against the tradition of supplying troops for deployment outside the region, in what was in effect a form of collective Imperial defence. The deployments to Fiji were slow, inadequate and ill-equipped, but they were more than token efforts and were generally made at the expense of a homeland defence of New Zealand as well as the commitment to Commonwealth defence. Previously defence of the northern approaches had largely been a task of the Royal Navy but since its power had evaporated in the South Pacific,

¹⁵³ Ibid., Cable, Fraser to Governor Fiji, 10 June 1942.

¹⁵⁴ Documents, Vol. III, pp.327-8.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., Cable, Nash to Fraser, 24 June 1942.

¹⁵⁶ Fraser to Nash, 26 June 1942, Documents, Vol. III, p.332.

¹⁵⁷ Archives NZ, Air 118, 81f Defence of Pacific, Narrative p.97.

Wellington had no option but to assume the role. The troops from Fiji would form the core of New Zealand's Pacific Division and would return to the South Pacific in 1943.

CHAPTER 2: CONSTITUTION AND ROLE

Even before its soldiers returned from Fiji, questions arose as to what New Zealand's contribution would be to the land war in the South Pacific – home defence, combat troops, garrison units, labour units or a combination of these types. Answers would inevitably involve its senior partner, the United States. This chapter addresses the questions of why and how 3NZ Division came to be formally created, how it came to be configured in a form unusual for a British division, why it was deployed far from New Zealand's shores and how it came to be involved in combat operations.

Although both Wellington and Washington were initially enthusiastic about a deployment of New Zealand soldiers in the South Pacific, they cooled as the threat of invasion to New Zealand receded, manpower became critical and misunderstandings arose. Although they had a common interest in defeating Japan, they had other, sometimes competing interests. Moreover, senior politicians and military leaders on both sides had their own sometimes changing agendas.

The American military hierarchy was headed by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, described as an 'activist commander' in terms of oversight and strategy making.¹ Under Roosevelt were the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, which consisted in July 1942 of General George C. Marshall (Chief of Staff), Admiral Ernest J. King (Commander in Chief U.S. Navy), Admiral William D. Leahy and Lieutenant General Henry H. Arnold. Because the Pacific War was essentially a naval conflict, King predominated.² Under the Joint Chiefs were various Area command structures. Roosevelt and King played important roles in relation to 3NZ Division, but so did Area Commanders such as Admirals Chester Nimitz, Robert Ghormley and William Halsey.

New Zealand's position on the constitution and deployment of the Division varied and the stances of various political and military commanders changed as the war progressed. Key individuals were Walter Nash (New Zealand Minister to Washington), Fred Jones

¹ Eric Larabee, Commander in Chief - Franklin Delano Roosevelt, His Lieutenants and Their War, New York: Andre Deutsch, 1987, p.2.

² Ibid., pp.173, For example the decisions to commence offensive operations in the Pacific leading to the Guadalcanal Campaign, the decision to bypass Rabaul, and the Central Pacific Drive.

(New Zealand Minister of Defence), Prime Minister Peter Fraser, Lieutenant General Edward Puttick, (senior New Zealand Military Commander) and Major General Barrowclough. Their views differed regarding the force's size, its role, and if it should be deployed overseas. To add to the confusion, mixed messages were received from the Americans as the role they envisaged for the Division and the New Zealanders in turn gave the Americans mixed messages as to its size, its level of training and Wellington's willingness for it to face combat under American command.

A number of factors favoured the use of the Division as garrison troops. Such troops did not need a high standard of physical fitness, advanced training or specialised equipment, and would not strain reinforcement and resupply facilities. The New Zealand troops from Fiji were untrained for combat operations and ill equipped, fit only for static warfare. Furthermore, the British were concerned at American statements about not fighting to restore the British Empire and they were fearful of losing former possessions to the Americans.³ A call went out to Canberra and Wellington to provide 'Empire sources garrisons for British islands in Pacific recaptured from the enemy'.⁴

Prior to Pearl Harbor, the American military had regarded Australasia as a British defence responsibility and gave no thought to the use of Australasian military forces.⁵ However, the collapse of British power meant that only the US Navy could protect Australasia. In mid-March 1942 the Americans agreed to do this and one consequence was that in the Pacific, unlike in the Mediterranean and Europe, American commanders decided strategy.⁶

The decision to defend Australasia was not straightforward. The US Pacific Fleet had been severely damaged at Pearl Harbor and there were invasion scares on the West Coast of the United States. American forces were minuscule and had a large area to defend. In the Army Plans Division, Brigadier General Dwight Eisenhower concluded

³ Christopher Thorne, Allies of a Kind – The United States, Britain and the War Against Japan 1941-1945, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978, p.371.

⁴ Archives NZ, EA 28, 28/19 Garrisons, SSDA to High Commissioner for the United Kingdom, Wellington, 12 July 1944.

⁵ War Plan Orange contemplated a drive across the Pacific, a climatic naval battle, the taking of advanced bases and a blockade of Japan. Edward S. Miller, War Plan Orange – The US Strategy to Defeat Japan 1897 – 1945, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1991.

⁶ Gunter Bischof and Robert L. Dupont (eds), The Pacific War Reconsidered, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1997, p.2.

that retaining Australasia was highly desirable but not mandatory.⁷ In contrast, King argued that Australia and New Zealand were 'white man's countries' and could not be abandoned to the Japanese. He persuaded Roosevelt of this.⁸ Consequently, an aircraft carrier and other naval units were committed to the Battle of the Coral Sea and forces were rushed to secure strategic points in the South Pacific.⁹

One manifestation of American dominance was the imposition of command areas in early April 1942. Despite strong protests from Canberra and Wellington, the Americans¹⁰ divided the Pacific between MacArthur and the US Army in the South West Pacific, and Nimitz and the US Navy in the South Pacific area. This fractured previous ANZAC command arrangements. Nash had pointed out to the Joint Chiefs of Staff that the defence of New Zealand would 'require a directive to the NZ Chief of Staff, as approved by NZ Government and whilst such command would require to fit in with general naval strategy for South Pacific, its work on land would probably require specific definition.'¹¹ This led the Americans specifically to exclude New Zealand from Nimitz's command, much to the perplexity of Fraser. Nash indicated that it was probably due to inconsistencies in New Zealand's position, and an American impression that Wellington could not be relied upon to provide troops.¹²

New Zealand still feared a Japanese invasion and Nash attempted unsuccessfully to persuade King to deploy six divisions there.¹³ Nash proposed that American

⁷ Memo Eisenhower to Marshall 25 March 1942, cited in George C. Dyer, The Amphibians Came To Conquer, Vol. 1, Washington: US Printing Office, 1969, p.248.

⁸ Samuel Eliot Morison, History of United States Naval Operations in World War II - Coral Sea, Midway and Submarine Actions May 1942-August 1942, Volume IV, New Jersey: Castle Books, 2001, p.246.

⁹ By the end of March 1942, American planning... had assigned major forces to eastern Samoa, Fiji, New Caledonia and to New Zealand and Australia, with Christmas, Canton, Bora Bora, Efate and Tongabatu destined to play host to smaller US garrisons, H.P. Wilmott, The War with Japan – The Period of Balance, May 1942 to October 1943, Wilmington DE: Scholarly Resources, 2002, p.20.

¹⁰ There was a dispute between the US Army and US Navy planners on demarcation. The Army wanted New Zealand, Fiji, the New Hebrides and New Caledonia in the South West Pacific Area under MacArthur's command. The US Navy considered that the maritime line of communication was a naval matter and should be under naval command. Dyer, Vol. 1, p.250.

¹¹ Archives NZ, Air 118, 19, Part 1, The Defence of the Pacific, p.72.

¹² Archives NZ, Air 118, 19 Defence of Pacific, pp.116-126, which sets out the confusion between Fraser and Nash as to whether New Zealand should or should not be included in Gormley's command area.

¹³ Nash had requested Fraser on 7 March 1942 to provide a brief appreciation of the land and air defence problems of NZ with an estimate of forces required. App. A to COS Paper 125, 12 March 1942 and Fraser had replied that six divisions were required together with tanks and artillery. For Fiji he estimated a Division, 2 Brigade Groups, 5 Battalions, tanks and artillery. Archives NZ, Puttick 5, W, 42716 App. B to COS Paper 125.

amphibious divisions be trained in New Zealand and in passing mentioned that 'we would train some of our men for amphibious work if essential equipment was provided and then they could take their part with Americans in the offensive.'¹⁴ His comment probably planted the seed in King's mind¹⁵ about the future use of New Zealand troops in combat operations. In early June King suggested that New Zealand should train troops for offensive operations with American troops¹⁶ and on 23 June asked Nash to indicate to Fraser that King and Marshall considered that New Zealand troops would be better 'undertaking training with our first Marine Amphibious Division in anticipation of joint offensive action to the north west'.¹⁷

However, nothing definite beyond good intentions was established. For Wellington, there was vagueness as to what the Americans wanted in terms of the force's size and role. There was also confusion between Fraser and Nash. Fraser apparently intended to provide combat troops, but Nash's inability to give a clear commitment to Washington almost relegated the Division to home defence. Certainly Nash later perceived that the general American attitude in Washington was that combat operations would be restricted to Americans and that the New Zealand Army would be confined to garrison duty.¹⁸

The idea of New Zealand troops undertaking amphibious training alongside American troops¹⁹ was again mentioned on 8 July when Commodore W.E. Parry, the New Zealand Chief of Naval Staff, visited Washington. Parry reported to Wellington that King had suggested that New Zealand might allow its Fijian garrison to train with a US

¹⁴ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/3 Vol 4, NZ Minister Washington to PMNZ, 8 May 1942.

¹⁵ King was thinking in terms of offensive operations and Nash's suggestion would undoubtedly have had resonance. On 29 April 1942 King wrote that 'It is urgently necessary that a amphibious force be stationed in the South Pacific' and ordered the creation of the South Pacific Amphibious Force. Richard B. Frank *Guadalcanal*, New York: Random House, 1990 p.46.

¹⁶ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/3 Vol 4, NZ Minister, Washington to PMNZ 9 June 1942.

¹⁷ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/3 Vol 4, NZ Minister, Washington to PMNZ 24 June 1942.

¹⁸ Archives NZ, Air 1, 130/10/2, Vol. 1; NZ Air Mission Washington to AHQ Wellington; Nash to Fraser, 29 November 1942.

¹⁹ The New Zealand Army took the suggestion seriously. See Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15 Vol 1. Notes on Amphibious Training, undated but July 1942. The author considered the only suitable unit apart from the Army Tank Brigade was 3NZ Division. If the landing craft of 1st US Marine Division could be made available then training could proceed. However, that would necessitate 3NZ Division being moved to the Wellington area thereby weakening the defence of the Auckland area. It was estimated that 3NZ Division could not commence training before the end of August. The Staff College and Tactical School were 'in a position to conduct courses in combined operations'. Two Brigadiers and two Lieutenant Colonels were identified as having attended courses at the Combined Training Centre, Egypt.

amphibious division for eventual participation in offensive operations. The Americans would provide equipment. On the face of it, King was accepting the earlier New Zealand offer. But King also indicated that he needed garrison troops to hold captured islands, thereby freeing up American amphibious troops. He said ‘there will also be a demand for troops other than those trained in amphibious operations’.²⁰ He appears to have had in mind follow-on troops to mop up and hold captured territory.

In mid-April 1942 the US War Plans Division prepared a four-stage plan for Pacific operations. The first stage involved building up American forces for the defence of the South and South Western Pacific, assembling and training amphibious forces, and undertaking minor offensive operations. The second involved ‘a combined offensive by United States, New Zealand and Australian amphibious naval and air forces through the Solomons and New Guinea to capture the Bismarck Archipelago and the Admiralty Islands’. The third and fourth stages envisaged advances into the Caroline and Marshall Islands and Dutch East Indies.²¹

Nimitz’s directive from the Joint Chiefs in April 1942 was to secure the lines of communication between the United States and Australasia and ‘prepare for the execution of major amphibious offensives against positions held by Japan, the initial offensives to be launched from the South Pacific and South-West Pacific Area’. All armed forces within his Area would be told by their governments that orders from him would be regarded as orders from them. The Joint Chiefs were to decide operational strategy with King passing their instructions to Nimitz.²²

This raised the spectre of New Zealand forces being deployed overseas without Wellington’s consent. The New Zealand Government told King that any proposal to move its forces into the Pacific would require its prior approval.²³ King indicated to Nash on 14 April 1942 that the Joint Chiefs would ‘prevent the occurrence of difficulties which your government anticipates’. He assured Nash that New Zealand forces in Fiji would remain under New Zealand command and would not be moved

²⁰ Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15/1 New Zealand Legation (Washington) to PMNZ 8 July 1942.

²¹ Grace Person Hayes The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in World War II – the War Against Japan, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1982, p.139.

²² Archives NZ, Air 1, 130/4/1, 4 April 1942.

²³ Ibid.

without Wellington's approval. He indicated that proposals by the Joint Chiefs were subject to Roosevelt's review and that of the Pacific War Council. King also noted that there was a further safeguard in 'the power each nation retains to refuse the use of its forces for any project which it considers inadvisable'.²⁴ Fraser responded that 'all the resources of New Zealand and its peoples will be used in the fullest co-operation with you and your commanders to assist in carrying the present struggle to a successful conclusion'.²⁵ King thus received mixed messages, with Fraser both pledging full co-operation and emphasising New Zealand's right to withhold its troops.

Vice Admiral Robert Lee Ghormley²⁶ was appointed Commander of the South Pacific Area in April 1942.²⁷ He arrived in New Zealand on 21 May, determined to avoid entanglement with New Zealand politics and military commitments.²⁸ His forces were limited and he did not want any further drain on them.²⁹ He set up his headquarters in Auckland in June but rapidly moved it to Noumea.³⁰ Ghormley could not, however, entirely avoid contact with the New Zealand establishment and met with the New Zealand War Council³¹ on 25 May. Fraser expressed his hope that Ghormley would set up his headquarters in Wellington for close liaison with the War Cabinet and NZCOS. Ghormley bluntly retorted that this would 'probably cause waste of valuable time due to long discussions'. Fraser assured Ghormley that they would be careful of his time and

²⁴ Archives NZ, Air 1, 130/4/1 King to Nash, 14 April 1942.

²⁵ Archives NZ, Air 1, 130/4/5 Nash to Fraser, 15 April 1942.

²⁶ Ghormley was a curious choice for COMSOPAC. He had graduated from Annapolis in 1906 but had limited sea command experience, being involved in staff positions working his way up to Vice Chief of Naval Operations. In 1940 he was sent to London as part of a naval liaison mission. He was successful in this role, which brought him into contact with Churchill and Roosevelt. He was recalled to Washington in April 1942 and appointed COMSOPAC despite having had no recent service in the Pacific. There were others such as Halsey and Fletcher who had combat experience and a better claim to the position. It is likely that Roosevelt had taken an interest in his career. See Bruce Loxton, and Chris Coulthard Clark, *The Shame of Savo*, St. Leonards NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1997, pp.7-12. The oddity is that Ghormley was successful in dealing with the British, but abrasive and undiplomatic in dealing with New Zealanders.

²⁷ He assumed official command of the South Pacific Area on 19 June 1942 which encompassed all land, sea and air units in the South Pacific Area except for the land forces in New Zealand. Archives NZ, AD Series 12, DAZ 154/1/6.

²⁸ War Diary of COMSOPAC, 25 May 1942, Micro MS 0916, Alexander Turnbull Library.

²⁹ Fraser was advised by Nash in Washington that 'Navy Department would prefer requests for equipment to be forwarded through Ghormley as this simplifies procedure and cuts out British Purchasing Commission'. Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15/1, Nash to Fraser 8 July 1942. Such requests would not have been welcomed by Ghormley as he was progressively overwhelmed with paperwork aboard the USS

Argonne.

³⁰ Louis Morton, *Strategy and Command - The First Two Years*, Washington: Department of the Army, 1962, p.261.

³¹ War Diary COMSOPAC, 25 May 1942. The Council consisted of Fraser, Jones, Coates and the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff.

went so far as to say that ‘regardless of how Admiral Ghormley’s instructions read, they would consider Admiral Ghormley as “The Supreme Commander” in this area’. Ghormley asked Fraser if he understood the vital importance of shipping and its maximum efficient utilization, and Fraser assured him that he did. Puttick raised the issue of the command of New Zealand forces in New Zealand and the possibility of an expeditionary force. Ghormley replied that ‘if he wished for a New Zealand Expeditionary Force he would ask the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff for one’. Fraser assured Ghormley of Wellington’s full co-operation.³² Ghormley urged the Government to strengthen the garrison on Fiji³³ and was in favour of New Zealand forces being used in a garrison role. The following day Ghormley attended a meeting of the Chiefs of Staff and was briefed on the state of New Zealand’s defences. Puttick indicated Wellington’s support for New Zealand troops remaining in Fiji.

On 28 May 1942, Ghormley attended the War Cabinet. Fraser asked about American plans and Ghormley responded ‘that he had been instructed not to impart information except to those who needed it’. Fraser pointed out that ‘where New Zealand forces might be employed information was necessary in order to co-ordinate effort’. Ghormley replied that ‘where information was necessary it would be given.’ Fraser enquired about plans for New Zealand forces. Ghormley responded ‘that when he needed New Zealand forces he would only ask if they were not needed for the defence of New Zealand. That it was for the Prime Minister and the War Cabinet to decide if they could be released.’³⁴ Ghormley’s dealings with Fraser were at best undiplomatic and at worst disrespectful,³⁵ but New Zealand needed American assistance and latitude was given to him.

³² Ibid.

³³ ‘On the urgent representations of Admiral Ghormley as to the necessity of strengthening the defences of Fiji,’ PMNZ to SSDA, 26 May 1942, War History Branch, Documents Relating to New Zealand’s Participation in the Second World War, Vol. III, Wellington: War History Branch, 1963, p.326. This caused King embarrassment. He told Nash ‘that Ghormley should not have made the suggestion which might affect the United States promise to send a division to New Zealand and their plans for disposition in the islands’. See p.327.

³⁴ War Diary COMSOPAC 28 May 1942, Micro AS 0916.

³⁵ Vandegrift was surprised in late June 1942 that Ghormley ‘whom he remembered from Washington as being an intelligent quiet and most gracious person’ was ‘harassed and almost brusque’, Loxton and Clark, p.56. Ghormley was showing the effects of stress.

Completely independently of Wellington, Ghormley decided that the New Zealand garrison on Fiji should remain there. When this view was disregarded, he reiterated to Nimitz on 24 June his concerns over the withdrawal and advised that it was 'essential that New Zealand troops remain in Fiji until the 37th US Division is experienced'.³⁶ Ghormley's views were thus in accord with Wellington's, but he failed to change Nimitz's mind. An Advanced Headquarters 3NZ Division was established in Auckland on 6 July 1942 and the Division became an Army Reserve with the intention of later building up to full strength.³⁷

Although Fraser supported the retention of 2NZ Division in the Middle East up to El Alamein, he was concerned about the Japanese threat and feared that the South Pacific would become a backwater. He mirrored King's desire for an offensive. Fraser had initially focused on protecting New Zealand by garrisoning Fiji but after those troops were repatriated, he began to think of using the garrison troops as a cadre for a division for combat operations. Fraser's desire for New Zealand troops to take part in offensive operations³⁸ in the South Pacific stemmed from a mixture of motives.³⁹ They included securing New Zealand's defence, ensuring a 'British' presence in the Pacific War⁴⁰ and establishing a claim for a New Zealand voice in the post-war settlement in the Pacific⁴¹. An additional factor was deflecting Australian criticism for failing to withdraw 2NZ Division from the Middle East.

Yet Fraser continued to qualify his enthusiastic offers to participate in land operations with the Americans. Reflecting the First Labour Government's air-mindedness, he sought to have the RNZAF placed under American command and told Nash that Wellington wished to provide twenty squadrons of modern aircraft by 1943. However,

³⁶ War Diary COMSOPAC, 24 June 1942.

³⁷ Archives NZ, WAI Series 1, DAZ 121/1/25; Archives NZ, AD, Series 12, 28/15 Volume I, Army HQ Letter 18 July 1942.

³⁸ Archives NZ, EA 81/1/28 Fraser to Churchill 19 November 1942. 'We would wish to participate in any such offensive to the fullest extent of our capacity'.

³⁹ One factor was the fear that Allied pre-occupation with the European war would afford the Japanese an opportunity to launch fresh attacks in the Pacific. Archives NZ EA 81/1/28 Fraser to Churchill, 22 September 1942.

⁴⁰ 'It would be neither wise nor proper to allow the offensive against the Japanese in the South Pacific to be conducted entirely by Americans without substantial British collaboration', Fraser to Churchill, 4 December 1942, *Documents*, Vol. II, p.148.

⁴¹ Archives NZ, EA 1, 87/21/3 Fraser to Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs 29 April 1943.

the Americans would have to provide the aircraft.⁴² It would also entail a huge allocation of personnel. In a draft cable to Nash (never sent) dated 12 July 1942 Fraser indicated that although 'New Zealand would be willing to detach certain army formations and place them under American control for amphibious operations' this 'would not permanently release them from their defence functions in New Zealand until the time came for them to move out of New Zealand'.⁴³ Fraser remained wary of high-risk operations due to his experiences of the Greek and Crete Campaigns. This wariness increased when Ghormley told Puttick of the impending invasion of Guadalcanal but specified that he not tell the War Cabinet until 7 August 1942. When Fraser learned of Watchtower from MacArthur and Curtin, he remonstrated with Ghormley that he did not want another Crete in the Pacific and demanded to be advised of plans for any proposed use of New Zealand troops.⁴⁴

When Ghormley sought on 13 July 1942 to obtain US Army or New Zealand troops to relieve the 1st US Marine Division after its impending invasion of Guadalcanal, he was told that it was not the US Army's intention to provide garrison troops. Furthermore, King stressed that he should approach the New Zealanders 'only if you believe you can handle without upsetting arrangements re Fiji',⁴⁵ meaning the repatriation of New Zealand troops from Fiji.⁴⁶ However, Nimitz directed Ghormley to investigate 'the use of New Zealand troops for garrison forces in advanced positions'.⁴⁷

Chief of General Staff, Lt. General Edward Puttick⁴⁸ also influenced the constitution and role of the Division. His responsibility for the defence of the New Zealand homeland coloured his attitude, with his advice often cautious and tinged with reservations. He had begun his career as a draughtsman for the Public Works

⁴² Archives NZ, Air 118/81, PMNZ to NZ Minister in Washington, 22 June 1942.

⁴³ Archives NZ, Air 118, 19 Defence of Pacific, p.124. As the narrator comments 'This maintains the usual standard of confusion'.

⁴⁴ Admiral Ghormley's Account of Early History, April-November 1942. Library of Congress Manuscript Division The Papers of Ernest J King, Box 2, DA, NHC R.V. Goddard to R.L. Ghormley 2 August 1942. Goddard reported to Ghormley that Fraser 'was feeling somewhat injured that it should be possible for him to find out such matters from Gen. MacArthur but not from you!'

⁴⁵ COMINCH to COMSOPAC 142226 July 1942, cited in Dyer, Vol. I, pp.445-6.

⁴⁶ The situation was complex - pending the arrival of US troops it had been suggested that New Zealand troops be sent to Fiji. In July 1942 there was also the matter of shipping -Troopships such as USS President Coolidge shuttled between New Zealand and Fiji delivering US troops and removing New Zealand troops. Archives NZ, EA 81/1, US Plan of Relief Cable PM to Gov. Fiji, 10 June 1942.

⁴⁷ Nimitz Command Summary Book One, pp.618-619, 642 and War Dairy of COMSOPAC, 15 July 1942.

⁴⁸ W. David McIntyre, 'Puttick, Edward 1890-1976', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, URL <http://www.dnzb.govt.nz>.

Department and was familiar with the ways of the Civil Service, which was reflected in the memoranda and advice he provided. A World War I veteran, Puttick became a member of New Zealand's Permanent Force and held various staff positions. He commanded 4th New Zealand Infantry Brigade in the disastrous Greek Campaign. He had thus experienced the dangers of operating under enemy-dominated skies. After Crete Fraser had offered him the position of Senior Land Force Commander in New Zealand and he relinquished a combat role for that administrative post. Based in Wellington, Puttick was attuned to politics and Fraser's desire for New Zealand participation in South Pacific offensive operations.⁴⁹

Puttick attempted to ascertain American requirements for New Zealand units from Ghormley on his arrival in New Zealand, but Ghormley was completely opaque as to these.⁵⁰ The War Cabinet then authorised Puttick to discuss with the Americans amphibious training for New Zealand troops.⁵¹ Puttick wrote that 'on the assumption that it is the wish of War Cabinet that NZ troops should take part in offensive operations' that a reinforced division (Force D) be the basis for planning, that the cadre of forces returned from Fiji be its foundation and that a divisional commander be appointed immediately. The choice of the reinforced division would enable Wellington to keep its options open for garrison or combat operations.

Puttick sought advice, not from the Americans, but from the British, on the possible organisation of amphibious and garrison operations. He indicated that his assumption that New Zealand troops would be involved in offensive operations was 'confirmed by Cables from Washington suggesting that the 3rd NZ Division on return from Fiji should train with the 1st United States Marine Division for amphibious operations'. He thought that brigade groups with reduced equipment would be suitable.⁵²

In late July Puttick visited Ghormley and again discussed the role of New Zealand troops. Ghormley indicated they would be used as follow-on troops to secure captured

⁴⁹ Fraser believed that it was not possible to 'hold in the Pacific. We must advance or be compelled to retreat'. Furthermore, he felt that as soon as the Second Front was opened it would be 'the moment for the Japanese to make a whole-hearted attack in the Pacific'. Archives NZ, EA1, 87/1 Pt 2, PM Dept Papers on Defence, Fraser to Churchill, 22 September 1942.

⁵⁰ Alexander Turnbull Library, War Diary, COMSOPAC 28 May 1942, Micro AS 0916.

⁵¹ Documents, Volume III, p.351.

⁵² Archives NZ, AD12, Box 21, Secret Cables – E. Puttick, Puttick to Park, 16 July 1942. Puttick foresaw three roles – amphibious, garrisons, participation in large offensive operations from Australia.

areas, freeing up American amphibious assault troops.⁵³ The numbers required would be dependent on the scope and locations of operations. However, he suggested that New Zealand prepare four different force configurations 'so as to be able to meet any contingency at short notice' and 'be ready to embark after 25 August'.⁵⁴ The configurations all featured anti-aircraft and heavy artillery and were best suited to defensive operations⁵⁵. Ghormley also indicated that he did not require New Zealand troops to be amphibiously trained because he had sufficient troops for that type of operation and special equipment was scarce. He considered New Zealand should supply garrison troops.⁵⁶ He undoubtedly needed garrison troops, but he was manifestly incorrect in stating that he had sufficient amphibious troops. The USMC was expanding rapidly in early 1942, but at the time of Operation Watchtower there was only the under-strength, under-trained 1st Marine Division available⁵⁷ and Ghormley as COMSOPAC would have been painfully aware of that.

Puttick expressed support for Ghormley's request to Jones on 31 July 1942, while acknowledging that there was 'considerable work and no time to spare'. The Division would have to obtain men from throughout New Zealand but the most would have to come from the Reserve Brigade Group and Home Defence forces. He pointed out that New Zealand home forces were stronger due to the Army Tank Brigade, improved equipment and training, together with an improved strategic situation. He acknowledged the danger of sending forces off shore but urged the War Cabinet to assist Ghormley 'to the maximum possible extent'. He indicated that in the meantime he was 'proceeding with the reorganisation of the 3rd Division'.⁵⁸

⁵³ The US Marine Corps had developed a specialisation as assault troops for amphibious operations. They had developed a doctrine and had tested the practicalities of landing operations. To use them in a garrison role, as occurred on Guadalcanal, was to waste their expertise. If the offensive in the South Pacific was to begin the Marines had to be freed from the role of ordinary combat troops.

⁵⁴ This date of 25 August 1942 suggested by Ghormley was probably his conception of when American positions on Guadalcanal would be secured and the island could be handed to garrison forces.

⁵⁵ Force A consisted of an infantry brigade with attached coastal defence artillery and AA units. Force B was likewise with two heavy batteries for harbour defence Force C was the same as Force B but with the addition of an infantry brigade D Force consisted of three infantry brigades with heavy coastal defence and AA batteries.

⁵⁶ Puttick to NZ Minister of Defence, 31 July 1942, Documents, Vol. III, pp.351-2.

⁵⁷ Gordon Rottman, US Marine Corps Pacific Theatre of Operations 1941-43, Oxford: Osprey Publishing Ltd, 2004, pp.65-66.

⁵⁸ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/15/1, 'Operation Kiwi', Puttick to Jones, 31 July 1942.

Within a few days Puttick reported on 'the major difficulties' involved⁵⁹. They included the necessity of replacing unsuitable and medically unfit personnel, the needs of 2NZ Division, the under-strength nature of most units, the need to inoculate troops, administrative problems associated with leave, equipment and uniform problems, requirements of operational security and the fact that the units returning from Fiji would not be available until 30 August, five days after Ghormley's deadline. Puttick also touched on the deficiencies in training. Yet he advised that 'the scope and nature of operations justifies the acceptance of such risks as are involved in the employment of incompletely trained troops.' Puttick warned that it was dangerous to assume that troops would be used only in limited roles.⁶⁰ He assessed the despatch overseas of 3NZ Division would result in the disappearance of the Army Brigade Group and a weakening of the defences around Auckland, but this could be accommodated by redeploying units. He then analysed the strategic situation, emphasizing that there were no certainties. American forces had built up in the South Pacific and seemed intent on offensive operations. He thought it probable that Japan would confine operations to where it had air superiority, but might attempt 'vigorous offensive operations' in New Guinea or New Caledonia. However, he considered a major Allied naval defeat, and the fall of New Caledonia and Fiji were prerequisites for an invasion of New Zealand. He concluded that New Zealand security would be enhanced by participating 'to the fullest extent in offensive operations against the Japanese' whilst strengthening Home Defence forces, because an Allied naval disaster could create 'a most urgent Home Defence problem' and strong Home Defence forces could support forward forces. Provided forces were brought up to strength, and that proposed American operations were reasonable and enhanced New Zealand security, the War Cabinet would be justified in despatching the reinforced division configuration.⁶¹ Consequently the War Cabinet decided 'that a Division be established and trained in New Zealand for offensive purposes - the basis of the Division to be the Fijian Force and the 7th Brigade Group'. On 11 August it approved the appointment of Major General H.E. Barrowclough as commander.

⁵⁹ Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15/1 Puttick to Jones, 3 August 1942.

⁶⁰ Puttick made a reference to British garrison troops in Egypt being used to suppress the Senussi revolt in 1915 'for which they had been unsuitable'. He had been involved in this.

⁶¹ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/15/1, 'Operation Kiwi', Puttick to Jones, 3 August 1942.

In that capacity Barrowclough also played a role in its development and deployment. He had been recalled from Egypt on 22 February 1942 with the indication that he would command the Pacific Division. A battle-hardened veteran of the Western Front in World War I and North Africa in World War II, Barrowclough was a combat soldier, but one with considerable administrative skills. After returning, he discovered to his dismay that the command of the forces in Fiji had been given to Major General Mead because the suddenness of Cunningham's departure and the worsening of the situation had necessitated an immediate appointment. Barrowclough was then employed assessing New Zealand's defence against possible invasion.⁶² However, following Mead's accidental demise, Puttick arranged for Barrowclough to take command of 3NZ Division on 12 August. Barrowclough's instructions refer to undertaking 'offensive operations'⁶³ and this would have fitted his inclinations.

On 10 August 1942 Brigadier Stewart, the DCGS, reported on a visit he had made to COMSOPAC, where he was told that the New Zealand force would relieve the 1st US Marine Division. Due to the large size of Guadalcanal, Kiwi D would be required,⁶⁴ but shipping difficulties meant that it could not be moved in one lift. Stewart favoured a first echelon made up of an infantry brigade, anti-aircraft units, artillery and supporting forces. He stressed the unhealthy nature of Guadalcanal (malaria, blackwater fever, dysentery, jungle sores), water supply problems, lack of roading, need for cover from rain and weather and problems with local intelligence.⁶⁵ Stewart had strong reservations about logistics and the need for the Americans to commit to this. He concluded that 'a reinforced div(ision) is the minimum force which can do the job. Anything smaller is asking for trouble.' He also concluded that 'casualties from disease alone will be heavy and will necessitate a constant flow of reinforcements'. He warned that New Zealand could expect shipping losses from air and submarine attacks.⁶⁶

⁶² More specifically, North Auckland and the Bay of Islands. He gloomily concluded 'with our present grouping of forces I am certain that we cannot hold any of these positions for more than a few hours.' Peter Cooke, *Defending New Zealand - Ramparts on the Sea 1840-1950's, Part 1*, Wellington: Defence of New Zealand Study Group, 2001, pp.338-340.

⁶³ War Cabinet Minute 11 August 1942.

⁶⁴ For much of the Guadalcanal campaign, American forces had held a perimeter around Henderson Field. It would only be after the balance had tilted in American favour that thought was given to securing the whole island.

⁶⁵ 'It is not safe to count on taking over maps left by Marines'. Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15/1.

⁶⁶ Archives NZ, AD 12, 28/15/1, 'Operation Kiwi', Notes by DCGS as a result of visit to Rear COMSOPAC, 10 August 1942.

Although Ghormley did not want New Zealand combat troops, he was advised by Wellington by cable on 10 August that a reinforced division would be made available to him 'as requested' from 25 August.⁶⁷ This offer was communicated by Stewart to the COMSOPAC ADM, Colonel Mead. Gillespie rightly indicates the offer as impossible of fulfilment.⁶⁸ Importantly the despatch of the force was subject to New Zealand Government approval after Fraser had consulted personally with Ghormley. This provided an opportunity for non-performance whilst seeming to co-operate. Ghormley was ensconced in Noumea and unlikely to return to Wellington. If he had, Fraser would have sought assurances and required information. The force was to assist the Marines on Guadalcanal and reference was made to New Zealand forces taking over 155 mm artillery from them and the need for the Americans to provide equipment for unloading. The cable also referred to a statement by Fraser that if an immediate decision was not necessary he would plan on leaving Fulcrum on 14 August. Stewart, however, pressed for an urgent decision and indicated that the New Zealand Army was 'making preparations in advance of approval'.⁶⁹

Ghormley declined the offer.⁷⁰ His reasons appear to have been his aversion to dealing with foreign troops, shipping and support problems, reservations about the combat-worthiness of New Zealand troops, unwillingness to deal with Wellington⁷¹ and his focus on the battle for Guadalcanal.⁷² COMSOPAC was advised that the New Zealand

⁶⁷ Gillespie, p.74; Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/15, Cable DCGS to COMSOPAC, 10 August 1942. Gillespie failed to mention the offer had substantial conditions. F.L.W. Wood following Gillespie refers to the Government being so willing it made Ghormley a promise, F.L.W. Wood The New Zealand People at War – Political and External Affairs, Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1971, p246..

⁶⁸ Gillespie p74 'the last units of 3 Division did not return from Fiji until 14 August and the force was not sufficiently trained for such immediate despatch'.

⁶⁹ One of those preparations was a request to the Governor of Fiji (Message No 155, 18 August 1943) for the services of a medical officer and other officials with knowledge of the islands 'to meet the possibility of New Zealand troops being despatched to Solomons'.

⁷⁰ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/15, Cable COMSOPAC to DCGS, 11 August 1942.

⁷¹ Ghormley's biographer records that 'Ghormley must have breathed a great sigh of relief for the local newspapers in Auckland on 31 July, just eight days before the landings had reported that Mr Fraser, the New Zealand Prime Minister, in a speech in Australia, had stated that the allies were about to begin an offensive in the South Pacific, Ghormley feared that the Japanese would have been alerted by this speech and the surprise, which was so necessary for success, would have been taken away from the operation'. Commander Robert Lee Ghormely, Jr., U.S. Navy, Retired Vice Admiral Robert Lee Ghormley, U.S. Navy, unpublished manuscript, 1996. Author's Collection.

⁷² The American foothold on Guadalcanal was tenuous. Although the landings on 7 August 1942 were successful the disastrous Battle of Savo Island two days later triggered the withdrawal of transports and the USN covering force. Thereafter the battle see-sawed. These uncertainties were conveyed to Fraser in November 1942 – 'operations in the South Pacific have entered a critical phase. The serious naval losses

force was to be held in abeyance.⁷³ Ghormley later complained that the New Zealanders were always asking questions and he felt that Wellington was 'so afraid that they will run into a second Crete that they are very backward in coming forward'. He concluded that 'they do not want to put their troops into a hot spot [and] in some ways you cannot blame them.'⁷⁴

Meanwhile Fraser's confidence in Ghormley had been fundamentally undermined, changing his attitude towards a forward deployment of the Division. Fraser called into Noumea on 12-13 August 1942 on his way to Washington with a party of senior civil servants and Gordon Coates. He wished to clarify Ghormley's requirements for fighting the Japanese in the Solomons. However, what Fraser observed shocked him.⁷⁵ Ghormley had just received the news of the disaster at Savo Island, where four major warships had been sunk with no loss of Japanese ships and the position of the Marines on Guadalcanal made even more precarious. He crumbled before Fraser's eyes. Fraser lost confidence in him, cancelled his trip to Washington, returned to New Zealand and began to think again of Home Defence. This is what the DCGS was referring to when he wrote to the American Lt. Col. Mead that 'there have been certain developments regarding the use of New Zealand troops for offensive operations' and that it was 'most unlikely that the New Zealand Government will agree to the despatch of any New Zealand troops for operations outside New Zealand until it is fully informed of the nature of the operations'. Wellington needed to be assured of likely success and that support was in place. Stewart attached a questionnaire for completion by the Americans.⁷⁶ He advised that the Government could take several days coming to a decision and suggested that the Americans make the request for troops 'at the earliest

which the Americans have sustained... render their ability to command the seas problematical... Should Guadalcanal fall, as well it may, and should Espiritu Santo also be taken,... the Americans will be thrown back on New Caledonia and Fiji'. Archives NZ, AD12, Box 21, Secret Cables – E Puttick, Nash to Fraser, 3 November 1942.

⁷³ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/15, Vol. 1, DCGS to Lt. Col. A.D. Mead COMSOPAC (ADM), 18 August 1942. Doubts arose as to whether Wellington would allow its troops to be sent overseas.

⁷⁴ Ghormley to Nimitz, 7 September 1942, Personal papers of Fleet Admiral Nimitz, Series XIII, Folder 14, United States Navy Historical Centre, cited in Brian Hewson, 'Goliath's Apprentice', unpublished manuscript, p.67.

⁷⁵ Gillespie p.74, Ghormley was extremely agitated... 'and was apprehensive of the future in the Pacific...'

⁷⁶ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/15/1, 'Operation Kiwi', DCGS to COMSOPAC ADM, 18 August 1942. The questionnaire enquired as to tasks to be allotted to New Zealand forces, the size and composition of the force, its naval and air support, who its commander would be, what arrangements were proposed to protect the convoy, what logistical arrangements were proposed, an appreciation of enemy strength and capabilities and shipping and loading details.

moment after you know that our assistance will be required'. He indicated that in the meantime steps were being taken to form a minimum force, Kiwi A, and that a larger force, Kiwi C, was also being formed. Ghormley had wanted a maximum force, Kiwi D, but this was being held in abeyance, although it could be formed if needed. Stewart concluded by expressing the hope that he had made 'the position perfectly clear to you', and that 'we must avoid misunderstandings'. Mead replied that 'our latest information is to the effect that the time and place of possible New Zealand participation is still indefinite'. He presciently raised the issue of brigade organisation and whether these would have three battalions each. He also seriously doubted 'that Ghormley could answer many of Stewart's questions'.⁷⁷

Puttick also began to have doubts about the desirability of despatching troops overseas and expressed this to Jones on 3 September. He indicated that Kiwi A, the smallest force, 'will not be sufficiently well trained to undertake an active role in the forward theatre of operations until it has had a period of at least six weeks training from date'. He acknowledged, however, that 'the circumstances might be such, and the emergency so great, as to justify the expiration of the period of training.' Puttick stated that he had informed Ghormley's staff of his views 'together with a reminder that the whole question of despatch of any force is subject to War Cabinet approval'.⁷⁸ Effectively a clear message had been sent to the Americans that even the smallest New Zealand force was not up to standard, and that there were likely to be problems getting Wellington's consent to overseas deployment. This effectively killed the prospect of New Zealand involvement in combat operations on Guadalcanal⁷⁹.

When New Zealand's offer of a full division had been turned down by Ghormley, Wellington decided to proceed with creating a unit to be called 'Kiwi A'.⁸⁰ Essentially

⁷⁷ Ibid, Lt. Col. A.D. Mead to Brigadier K.L. Stewart, 20 August 1942.

⁷⁸ Puttick to Jones, 3 September 1942, Documents, Vol. III, p.360.

⁷⁹ Puttick reported that 'from brief discussions with COMSOPAC and Staff understand we will NOT be asked to carry out opposed landings'. NZ troops may be required to carry out 'Garrisoning of small islands. Later perhaps land attacks in big islands or mainland. Therefore full scale supporting weapons necessary'. Puttick considered the Force would be liable to heavy counterattack and therefore required a high proportion of AA and coastal defence artillery to defend ports and landing places. Archives NZ, AD12, Box 21, Secret Cables Puttick to NZLO London: 8 September 1942.

⁸⁰ This was to be made up of:

- Divisional headquarters on a reduced scale
- Divisional artillery

it was no more than the follow-on garrison force sought by Ghormley but with a stronger artillery component. However, the New Zealand Army left its options open. Whilst Kiwi A was to have top priority, the formation of Kiwi C⁸¹ was also to proceed. This option included both 8 and 14 Brigades with supporting troops. However, it was stated clearly that the creation of Kiwi C was ‘not at the expense of mobile foundations outside 3 Div.’⁸² The Kiwi D force was shelved.

Although Kiwi C was in many ways a flexible option combining the possibilities of both offensive and garrison roles, there were problems of equipment, manpower and doctrine. On the latter Barrowclough favoured combined arms doctrine.⁸³ Organisation was hampered by delays in establishing the Base Headquarters Staff. There was also fuzziness with the relationship between Kiwi A and Kiwi C. The attitude had developed that Kiwi A was the priority and was distinct from Kiwi C, so that anything to do with Kiwi C could be resolved after Kiwi A had been deployed overseas. Unnecessary duplication and delays in training and equipping resulted. Barrowclough therefore sought a ruling that units would be brought up to Kiwi C levels.⁸⁴ He asked for priority over other formations on the basis that ‘I may be called upon to go into action immediately on landing at my destination, and the problem confronting me is very different from and much more difficult than that which confronted General

One field regiment	16	25-pounders
One heavy anti-aircraft regiment	16	3.7' guns
One light anti-aircraft regiment	36	40 mm guns
One heavy battery	4	6' guns

Two companies of engineers

One infantry brigade including anti-tank battery (12 guns)

Signals, ASC, Medical, etc.

Small overseas base organisation

Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15 Vol 1 DCGS to Lt. Col. A D Mead 18 August 1942.

⁸¹ Kiwi C was to be made up of:

Divisional headquarters

Divisional artillery

One field regiment	24	25-pounders
One heavy anti-aircraft regiment	24	3.7' guns
One light anti-aircraft regiment	48	40 mm guns
One heavy regiment	4	6' guns
	8	155 mm guns

Three companies of engineers

Two infantry brigades each including an anti-tank battery

Signals, ASC, Medical, etc.

Overseas base organisation.

Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15 Vol 1 DCGS to Lt. Col. A D Mead, 18 August 1942.

⁸² Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15/2 DCGS to HQ 3 Div., 17 August 1942.

⁸³ Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15/2 Barrowclough to Army HQ, 27 August 1942.

⁸⁴ Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15/2 Barrowclough to Army HQ, 1 September 1942.

Freyberg when he took the 2NZEF out of this country to an admirable training ground in Egypt.⁸⁵

Raising the troops was difficult. Kiwi A seemed to be more viable since it was smaller and more easily equipped, but this conflicted with Puttick's direction to 'Proceed with Force C including full scale transport.'⁸⁶ Puttick's wish could not have been achieved because the organisation and the transport was simply not available.

The US Headquarters made it clear that the Division would not be expected to carry out assault landings. It would most likely be needed for garrisoning small islands and possibly land operations on larger islands. Since units would be operating in the tropics, medical and other support would be needed. As heavy counter-attacks from air, sea and land captured areas were likely, beach-heads and ports would need to be strongly defended. This required anti-aircraft and coastal defence units. There was little chance that the Division would be sent into the combat zone whilst the danger of invasion to New Zealand remained high.⁸⁷

Later in September 1942 Fraser wrote to Nash:

With reference to troops for the South Pacific Area a tentative suggestion was made some time ago by Ghormley that we should prepare alternative units, the largest of which amounted to a Division. Ghormley has since made it clear that the time to ask for these has not yet arrived and our impression is that when requested the force will not be as large as a Division. In the meantime, we are preparing a Division in New Zealand which at present will be retained intact for the defence of New Zealand but could be made available either in whole or in part for transfer to the islands if in our opinion circumstances warrant it.⁸⁸

It would not be until after the victory at Guadalcanal, the removal of Ghormley and the beginning of the American counter-offensive that confidence would return.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15/2 DCGS to Barrowclough 4 September 1942

⁸⁷ Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15/2, Puttick to Brig. Park, 5 September 1942.

⁸⁸ Archives NZ, EA Series 1, 84/3/1 Intelligence General, PMNZ to NZ Minister Washington, 24 September 1942.

Ghormley remained unclear whether he had the New Zealand Government's consent to use their troops,⁸⁹ but a request from the New Zealand Supply Mission for anti-malarial drugs focused matters. These drugs could only be obtained from the US Navy. King advised Ghormley that Wellington had requested anti-malarial drugs for about 20,000 men and enquired whether he intended to use New Zealand troops in the forward area immediately.⁹⁰ Ghormley responded that 'Have as yet no permission from New Zealand Government to use its troops. In any case do not intend to use New Zealand troops in forward areas while situation remains critical.'⁹¹

Indeed, while King favoured moving to offensive operations,⁹² Ghormley had become defensive minded.⁹³ The resources available to him were limited⁹⁴ and the demands on them were huge, especially during the Guadalcanal Campaign.⁹⁵ As Allied losses mounted, his caution degenerated into indecision and defeatism.⁹⁶ Morison says that 'frequently he demanded troops from the West Coast but was always told there were none ready, and that he must "roll up" the garrisons of his rear areas Fiji and Samoa. That he refused to do, because he feared denuding these islands of defence forces would

⁸⁹ The New Zealand Official Historian, J.M.S. Ross, recognised the difficulty commenting 'the least effective way of arriving at a quick decision involving the use of New Zealand troops was to consult the New Zealand Government. It was certainly not the method to be adopted in an emergency'. Archives NZ, Air 118/81f, pp.15-16.

⁹⁰ Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15/1, Supply Mission to Nash, 7 September 1942.

⁹¹ Ibid., see also Gillespie, p.75.

⁹² King had instructed Nimitz on 3 April 1942 to 'prepare for execution of major amphibious offensive against frontiers held by Japan initially to be launched from South Pacific and South West Pacific Areas.' COMINCH 031905, April 1942, cited in Dyer, Vol. I, p.261.

⁹³ Ghormley's original directive had been to defend the sea lanes to Australasia. He received no instructions as to the priority he was to accord Watchtower and he ranked it second in priority. He also seems to have been confused as to the purpose of Watchtower - was it offensive, or simply a defensive move aimed at denying the Japanese an air base capable of threatening Allied positions? Richard B. Frank, Guadalcanal, New York: Random House, 1990, pp.56-57.

⁹⁴ In July 1942 there were only 32,000 American Army troops in the SOPAC area which was inadequate to cover existing needs. Dyer, Vol.I, p.445.

⁹⁵ Thomas B. Buell, Master of Sea Power - A Biography of Fleet Admiral Ernest J. King, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1995. Ghormley had discussions with MacArthur and together they sent a message to the Joint Chiefs of Staff urging the postponement of offensive operations in the South Pacific until they received reinforcements. King was furious. On 10 July 1942 King and Marshall ordered Ghormley to do what was absolutely essential for Watchtower, pp.219-220. Nimitz's biographer, Potter, commented that the Ghormley-MacArthur Conference seems 'to have generated little more than funk'. E.B. Potter, Nimitz, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1976 p.179.

⁹⁶ J. Arnold and S. Sinton, US Commanders of World War II: Navy and USMC, Oxford: Osprey Publishing Ltd, 2002, p.19. In September 1942 Ghormley sent a despatch to Washington stating that a major Japanese attack was imminent, his resources were inadequate and Guadalcanal could not be held. Larrabee, p.288.

tempt the enemy to attack them.’⁹⁷ As part of his defensive mentality, Ghormley consistently focused on the need to garrison bases and this coloured his attitude towards New Zealand troops.

Ghormley requested in early September 1942 that New Zealand garrison Tonga and Norfolk Island,⁹⁸ although this adversely affected New Zealand’s ability to have troops ready for deployment.⁹⁹ Ghormley’s response was that ‘the flexible situation necessitates the employment of troops where and when they are available’.¹⁰⁰ In the period late September and October 1942 36 Battalion and 34 Battalion were detached to garrison Norfolk Island (N Force) and Tonga (T Force) respectively¹⁰¹. The severing of two infantry battalions and supporting units from 3NZ Division during its deployment to New Caledonia potentially compromised its combat-worthiness,¹⁰² but using New Zealand troops as garrison troops fitted Ghormley’s view. Puttick supported his request despite the havoc this played with creating a force for deployment overseas.¹⁰³

Ghormley quickly followed up with a request for troops to reinforce New Caledonia,¹⁰⁴ thereby freeing up the Americal Division for operations on Guadalcanal following the withdrawal of 1st Marine Division.¹⁰⁵ Ghormley had intended to use New Zealand troops there as follow-on units, allowing the Marines to return to New Zealand. He had anticipated that the New Zealanders would only have to deal with guerrillas and the

⁹⁷ Morison, Vol. 4, p.183.

⁹⁸ Couched in the form of ‘suggestion’ - ‘United States War and Navy Departments suggest that garrison for Norfolk Island be provided by New Zealand’ : COMSOPAC to COMSOPAC ADMIN, undated, Archives NZ, EA1 86/20/2, Norfolk Island Assumption of Defence. The Australians readily withdrew their troops, Archives NZ, EA1, 86/20/2 Curtin to Fraser, 16 September 1942. It was not without its risks. Puttick noted that ‘unloading facilities are crude and slow ... There is no armament of any kind to protect shipping. He also considered the proposed force badly balanced and inadequate for the tasks it may be required to perform’. Archives NZ, EA1, 86/20/2 Puttick to Jones, 12 September 1942.

⁹⁹ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/15 Deputy Chief of Staff to COMSOPAC.

¹⁰⁰ Archives NZ, EA 86/20/1, Captain J.P. Olding (US Naval Attache, Wellington:) to Puttick, 13 October 1942.

¹⁰¹ Gillespie p 83.

¹⁰² Each brigade had only two battalions rather than the usual three.

¹⁰³ Archives NZ, AD 12, 28/15/1 Operation Kiwi. Puttick to COMSOPAC, 21 October 1942

¹⁰⁴ Archives NZ, Series 12, 28/15, Vol. 1, Cable COMSOPAC to COMSOPAC (ADM), 16 October 1942. Ghormley’s request resonated with Fraser. On 14 February 1942 Fraser stated that the capture of New Caledonia would ‘directly jeopardise our position in Fiji’. He requested Curtin to strengthen the defences of New Caledonia in much the same way as we have taken great risks to strengthen Fiji. Archives NZ, EA1, 86/20/2 Fraser to Curtin 14 February 1942.

¹⁰⁵ Major General A.A. Vandegrift, the Commander of 1st Marine Division, pressed for the relief of his Division from September 1942 onwards. Dyer, Vol. I, p.446.

New Zealand commander would assume overall command.¹⁰⁶ However, the Marines found themselves locked in combat and a full division was needed to relieve them.¹⁰⁷ The War Cabinet seem to have contemplated sending a full division but Puttick recommended to Jones that the lesser force, 'Kiwi C', should be made available immediately and be brought up to full strength as soon as possible.¹⁰⁸ Puttick supported the despatch overseas of an under-strength, under-trained force, but one likely to be only involved in garrison duty. The War Cabinet had agreed to send approximately two brigades to New Caledonia as soon as transport could be arranged. Puttick advised the Americans that a depleted Kiwi C would be ready for embarkation by 7 November.

Belatedly Puttick raised the issue on 2 November of whether the force was really suitable for the task facing it. He reminded the New Zealand Government of its responsibility to ensure 'that New Zealand forces are reasonably adequate to meet the conditions which may arise'. He suggested that this meant it had to have details of other forces involved, American plans to reinforce and support New Caledonia, and the overall US Navy plan so that Wellington could gauge the cover provided. He elaborated on the weaknesses of Kiwi C - no armour, field artillery below normal establishment and two infantry battalions below strength. He pointed out that it was the duty of COMSOPAC to support forces in the operational area, 'and New Zealand could perhaps legitimately rely upon not being required to meet any such commitment in the absence of any warning that supporting forces might conceivably be required from New Zealand'. Puttick seemed to be offering Wellington a ready-made reason for not supplying troops. He rammed home his concerns by saying that 'the nature of the campaign and the accidents of war make it advisable that New Zealand should at least make such preparations as would enable New Zealand troops to be moved at short notice to the support of its forward troops if the situation should make such a course necessary'. These potential reinforcements could come from existing Home Defence units. In addition, he recommended that an armoured regiment be sent at the first opportunity.¹⁰⁹ The War Cabinet approved the despatch of an armoured regiment on 5

¹⁰⁶ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/15, Vol. 1, Notes by DCGS on visit to COMSOPAC, August 1942.

¹⁰⁷ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/15, Vol. 1, Cable COMSOPAC to COMSOPAC (ADM) 11 August 1942.

¹⁰⁸ Documents, Vol. III, p.361.

¹⁰⁹ Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15/1 Puttick to Jones, 2 November 1942.

November. Puttick continued to harbour concerns about the safety of New Zealand troops and their need to be reinforced if disaster occurred.¹¹⁰

Concerns about the Solomons situation led Nimitz to make an inspection trip to Noumea. On 28 September 1942 he met Ghormley, sought a briefing and asked pointed questions. A further meeting took place on 2 October. Ghormley gave an estimate of Japanese capabilities that Nimitz found defeatist. Nimitz enquired about army troops and was told only one regiment was fit for combat. He moved on to ask about using New Zealand troops. Ghormley raised problems. Nimitz rejoined that 'If we can't find a formula for using them, it is Japan's gain. We should use all resources that are available to us.' Ghormley replied that he was unsure whether Wellington had agreed to allow its troops to fight under American command.¹¹¹ Nimitz replied 'Well, let's get it into the record. Ask them and if they refuse it will be in the record for the peace conference. They know that. We must overcome the obstacles in the way of how and where to employ them.' Ghormley then expressed doubts as to the adequacy of the New Zealanders' training. Nimitz responded, 'Well, don't put them in a place where they can lose the war for us. But there must be some place where we can use them. However, that is a detail I won't go into. That is your job to find out. I repeat again that to win this war we must use every resource we have'. Discussion then turned to the condition of the Marines on Guadalcanal and their need for relief. Nimitz stated 'we'll see about using New Zealand and Army troops' and concluded 'I repeat again - if we can't use our Allies we are God-damned fools.'¹¹²

Nimitz met his staff on 15 October and the consensus was that Ghormley lacked aggression, so Nimitz gained King's consent to relieve him and appointed Admiral William Frederick Halsey. Halsey was an energetic, aggressive commander, who placed his battleships and carriers at risk in sea battles around Guadalcanal. Although

¹¹⁰ Archives NZ, AD12, Box 21, Secret Cables E Puttick, Puttick to Park, 4 December 1942. 'Our role should be primarily maintenance of 2 and 3 Divisions and Pacific garrisons at full strength ability to support 3 Division in an emergency with one brigade group...'

¹¹¹ Puttick, in early September 1942, had expressed doubts about the level of training of 'Force A' and reminded him that 'the despatch overseas of any force is subject to War Cabinet approval'. Puttick to Jones, 3 September 1942. Documents, Vol. III, p.360. See also Archives NZ AD12, 28/15/1 DCGS to Lt Col AD Mead, 1 September 1942

¹¹² Nimitz to Ghormley: 'Notes on Conference held Aboard USS Argonne at 1300, October 2, 1942, cited in Edwin P. Hoyt, How They Won the War in the Pacific - Nimitz and his Admirals, Guildford CT: Lyons Press, 2002, pp.151-158.

suffering losses, he secured Allied naval dominance and then focused on taking the offensive.

In January 1943 Halsey visited New Zealand and made a favourable impression on Fraser. Subsequently Halsey had a meeting with Nimitz in Noumea and discussed with him the changed directive that made him responsible for the defence of New Zealand via the NZCOS. Halsey complained that Wellington had not specified what was available for home defence and what was for use in the Pacific. Nimitz told him to 'make a specific request for forces you want and tell them how you are going to employ each unit. Then you can devise the command set up.'¹¹³ The command of New Zealand forces was clarified in Halsey's directive of 25 February, with home defence forces being controlled through the NZCOS.

As originally envisaged, 'Kiwi C' was designed for holding captured territory, a role requiring coastal artillery and heavy AA units. This potentially restricted its mobility and usefulness. General Harmon contributed to the lack of clarity as to the Division's role by directing that all troops under his command were to make themselves available at short notice for movement to any of the islands in the South Pacific Theatre.¹¹⁴ Barrowclough considered it most likely that his Division would be called upon to relieve American units on Guadalcanal. However, two tasks had to be accomplished before it would be combat ready. The first was to flesh it out to make it capable of relieving an American division. The second was training it to a suitable standard for combat and acclimating it to tropical conditions. Barrowclough had reservations about the levels of training. He commented that - 'there is an enormous difference between the troops who served in Fiji and those who were gathered together from all over the country to make up the new units of this Force'.¹¹⁵

Barrowclough appreciated that the impedimenta of heavy artillery would limit his Division's role and usefulness. He argued for the construction instead of a normal British-style division based around infantry. This envisaged three brigades at full strength, together with supporting units, but 15 Brigade lacked a third infantry battalion

¹¹³ Nimitz Command Summary, Book Three, p.1348, cited in Hewson, p.85.

¹¹⁴ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/15, Vol. 2, Barrowclough to Army HQ, 17 January 1943.

¹¹⁵ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/15 Vol 2 Barrowclough to Army HQ 17 January 1943.

and consequently was not able to defend its allocated area, nor relieve the other two Brigades. Puttick agreed with Barrowclough that there was urgency in filling out 15 Brigade,¹¹⁶ probably from Home Defence Forces. This meant the commitment of an additional 3,000 men at a time of severe manpower shortage, but the experience of 2NZ Division had shown that a two-brigade division and two-battalion brigades were invitations to disaster.¹¹⁷ On 4 February 1943 the War Cabinet indicated that it was 'generally disposed to agree with General Barrowclough's requests set out in his communications to General Puttick on the 17th January'.¹¹⁸

Halsey remained short of both assault and garrison troops¹¹⁹ and also pressed for the completion of the Division. He told Coates in Noumea on 24 February 1943 that he wanted this to be done as soon as possible and he welcomed the prospect of a Maori battalion.¹²⁰ On 11 June he told Barrowclough that he wished to concentrate 3NZ Division in the Solomons about 15 August, 'preparatory to active combat employment'. He asked Barrowclough to present this proposal to Puttick and the War Cabinet. If they approved, a firm plan would be presented to Wellington.¹²¹

A complete shift in attitude had occurred. New Zealand troops were no longer seen as solely for garrison duty. However, Halsey was displeased at the prospect of an under-strength two-brigade division. He emphasised that 'There is a hard fight ahead of us and we are relying upon the New Zealand Division to bear its share of the effort,'¹²² but he did not make its completion any easier. Wellington suggested that the Division could be brought up to strength by incorporating Fijian troops, but Halsey vetoed it because American units would have to replace them and he would be deprived of the Fijian

¹¹⁶ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/18 Vol. 2, Puttick to Army HQ, 17 January 1943. The units needed urgently were a Field Artillery Regiment, 15 Brigade Headquarters with its supporting Signal Section, a Defence Platoon and Light Aid Detachment, a further Infantry Battalion, a composite ASC Company, a Field Ambulance, a Field Company of Engineers, an Anti-Tank Battery and a Light Artillery Regiment. Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/15 Vol 2, Puttick to Jones, 27 January 1943.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/15/2 War Cabinet Minute, 4 February 1943.

¹¹⁹ A month after relieving Ghormley, Halsey lamented 'It is not practical at this time to definitely settle the question of promptly relieving amphibious forces after a landing operation. It is a principle that should be followed but the question is one hinging on the availability of troops and the practicality of the relief under varying situations which cannot be foreseen. COMSOPAC to COMGENFIRSTMARDIV, PHIBFOR p.16-3(16) Ser 0010066, 22 November 1942, cited in Dyer, p.448.

¹²⁰ Coates to PMNZ, 24 February 1943, Documents, Vol. III, p.375.

¹²¹ COMSOPAC to Major General Barrowclough, 11 June 1943, Documents, Vol.III, p.385.

¹²² Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15 Halsey to Fraser, 21 August 1943.

troops as scouts and raiders. He preferred a dual brigade 3NZ Division to that.¹²³ He agreed to a proposal that a Fijian battalion be attached to the Division for raiding and scouting purposes and that a second-line New Zealand battalion would reinforce Fiji,¹²⁴ on condition that the number of Fijian troops in the Solomons was not reduced.¹²⁵ The Fijian battalion did not become available¹²⁶ and accordingly the War Cabinet authorised the reduction to a dual-brigade division and its use in combat, subject to Barrowclough certifying that it was suitably trained and equipped.¹²⁷ The Americans told Barrowclough that tasks allotted to the under-strength Division would be 'proportionately reduced'.¹²⁸

Halsey told Harmon on 26 July 1943 that once Barrowclough advised him that the Division was ready for combat, Harmon was to issue orders for its movement to Guadalcanal preparatory to offensive operations. Halsey foresaw this happening by 15 September.¹²⁹ Barrowclough advised the War Cabinet on 31 July 1943 that the Division was combat ready subject to certain reinforcements,¹³⁰ and he told Halsey that it was suitable subject to ammunition being supplied and the addition of the tank squadron and other detachments.

At this point Fraser began pulling back. He directed Halsey be told that because New Zealand had manpower difficulties, Barrowclough would not receive reinforcements and further agricultural production in New Zealand to supply the South Pacific would require withdrawing troops.¹³¹ Halsey was bluntly told that the Division would probably have to be withdrawn if New Zealand was to provide supplies for 50,000 men. Halsey indicated that he still felt that the Division should go into action,¹³² although he

¹²³ Admiral Halsey to Lt. Gen. Puttick, 24 June 1943, Documents, Vol. III, p.389.

¹²⁴ Puttick to Barrowclough, 26 June 1943, Documents, Vol. III, p.390.

¹²⁵ Documents, Vol. III, Footnote, p.390.

¹²⁶ The Governor of Fiji turned down the New Zealand request on the basis that this would be tantamount to the breakup of the Fijian Brigade Group. The Fijian Council of Chiefs had unanimously expressed the wish in September that 'Fijian Force should be sent abroad to assist in actual fighting in Africa or Egypt...' Archives NZ, 86/15/2 Pt 1 A NZ Forces Defence of Fiji, Governor of Fiji to Fraser 1 July 1943.

¹²⁷ War Cabinet Minute, 27 June 1943, Documents, Vol. III, pp.390-391.

¹²⁸ Barrowclough to Puttick, 24 June 1943, Documents, Vol. III, pp.389-390.

¹²⁹ Halsey to Harmon, 26 July 1943, Documents, Vol. III, p.401.

¹³⁰ Barrowclough to Army HQ, Wellington, 31 July 1943, Documents, Vol. III, p.401.

¹³¹ Fraser to Perry, HQ No. 1 Islands Group, 2 August 1943, Documents, Vol. III, p.384.

¹³² Perry to Fraser, 5 August 1943, Documents, Vol. III, pp.402-403.

expressed his disappointment to Fraser that he was not only, not being provided with a full division but that it would not receive reinforcements¹³³.

The move of the Division to New Caledonia was far from smooth.¹³⁴ It had to establish its own facilities and often lacked necessary stores and equipment, as local resources were stretched.¹³⁵ The Division was to occupy and defend the northern area of New Caledonia, Moindou to Kouqouq, to provide AA defence for Tontouta and assist with coast defence at Noumea.¹³⁶ One of 3NZ Division's major achievements was the creation of sophisticated base infrastructures such as 4NZ General Hospital at Dumbea.

General Peck, head of Admiral Halsey's War Plans Staff, indicated to Barrowclough in February 1943 that the Division would be required to train for amphibious operations. The 43rd US Division based in New Caledonia had already started such training.¹³⁷ On 6 March 1943 the War Cabinet agreed that 3NZ Division was to be increased from 14,400 to 17,637 and that priority was to be given to it in terms of reinforcements.¹³⁸ Given the tremendous pressure on manpower, that expansion was a major commitment.¹³⁹

¹³³ Archives NZ, AD 12, 28/15/1, Operation Kiwi, WF Halsey to P Fraser, 21 August 1943.

¹³⁴ There were 'unavoidable shortages' of motor transport. Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15/1 Barrowclough to Dove, undated – October 1942.

¹³⁵ Archives NZ AD Series 12, 28/15/2, Shortage of suitable buildings created tension between the Americans and local French authorities. Kim Munholland, Rock of Contention – Free French and Americans at War in New Caledonia 1940-1945, New York: Berghahn Books, 2005. It helped that New Zealand units were based in the northern area of New Caledonia, away from Noumea.

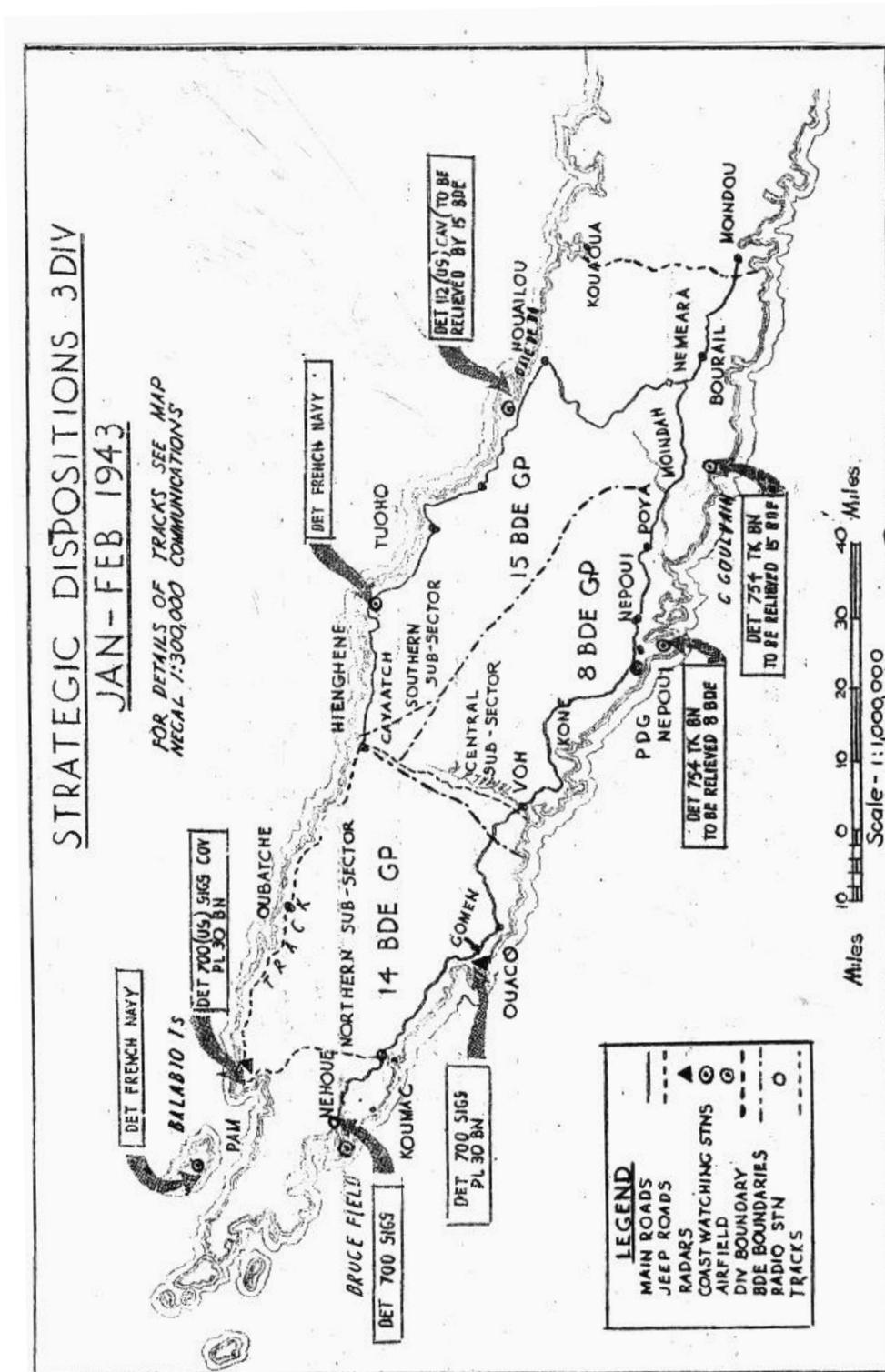
¹³⁶ Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15/ Vol 1, Notes on conference with Major General A.M. Patch 21 October 1942.

¹³⁷ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/15/4 Barrowclough to Puttick, 2 February 1943.

¹³⁸ Ibid., DCGS to Jones, 6 March 1943.

¹³⁹ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/15/2 Army Headquarters to Barrowclough, 17 March 1943.

NORTHERN NEW CALEDONIA SHOWING THE DISPOSITIONS OF 3NZ DIVISION 1943, AD 12, 28/15, VOL. 2, STRATEGIC DISPOSITIONS 3DIV. JAN-FEB, 1943, ARCHIVES NZ.



The uncertainty as to the Division's role and the lack of resources were particularly aggravating to Barrowclough. He wrote to Army Headquarters:

I have to decide what should be the size of my base installations and what degree of permanence my building construction should take. This is naturally bound up with the possibilities of our returning here and the number of reinforcements which are likely to be retained as base. At the present time these problems are almost overwhelming. We have large stocks of rations which are deteriorating through exposure to the weather and only gradually are we being able to provide proper coverage for them. The same applies for ammunition and in both cases our problem is accentuated by the fact that large supplies of ammunition and rations were landed here at the time when I had very few troops to handle them. Even now my numerous commitments are leaving only the barest minimum of training opportunities and I am handicapped largely by shortage of engineer equipment. Some road making equipment has just arrived, including some bulldozers, only one of which is a D4 Tractor equipped with earthmoving plant. Another D4 Tractor is without this plant, two D7 Tractors have no road making fittings and my CRE advises me that even if the materials would be sent over, the workshops here could not fit on a suitable earthmoving appliance. In the result, these tractors are practically useless and in order to keep open access to my Brigade, I have to employ large numbers of men road making with nothing but picks and shovels...¹⁴⁰

Frustrated at the lack of response to his requests by Army Headquarters in Wellington, he made representations to the United States Command.¹⁴¹ Consequently General Harmon and General Breene of US Headquarters told DCGS of their concerns about the slow rate of reinforcement and stores to 3NZ Division.¹⁴² Wellington responded that the delay was due to unavailability of US shipping.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, S28/15 Volume 2, Barrowclough to Army Headquarters, 2 February 1943.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., Barrowclough to USAFISPA, 6 May 1943.

¹⁴² Ibid., 'Notes on Tour of Inspection' DCGS.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

The eventual decision to deploy 3NZ Division in combat was effectively made by the Americans. Halsey advised Barrowclough on 11 June 1943 that he intended to move it to a forward base in the Solomons with a view to combat operations before the end of the year.¹⁴⁴ To fit in with other deployments, the Division had to begin moving around 15 August. Barrowclough returned to New Zealand for a meeting with the War Cabinet on 15 June and produced Halsey's missive. Only 14 days previously, Rear Admiral T.S. Wilkinson had advised the War Cabinet that 3NZ Division was not required for active operations,¹⁴⁵ and some were suspicious that Barrowclough had instigated the letter.¹⁴⁶ A compromise of sorts was reached with Barrowclough recognising that his division might have a short existence, and would in the meantime only have two brigades.¹⁴⁷ He was unhappy at what he considered 'shabby treatment',¹⁴⁸ but he had succeeded in getting the Division over the start line.

Whether Barrowclough had encouraged Halsey to request the services of 3NZ Division is a moot point. However, Halsey would not have done so had there been no perceived need for New Zealand troops in combat operations¹⁴⁹. In 1943 there was a general shortage of trained combat troops in theatre, something underscored by Halsey's anger at 3NZ Division being constituted as a two-brigade division. It is therefore likely that the suspicions regarding Barrowclough were unfounded.¹⁵⁰ This contention is further

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., COMSOPAC to Barrowclough, 11 June 1943. Halsey indicated that Barrowclough should present the proposal to Puttick and the War Cabinet 'with a view to determining whether or not these agencies are prepared to take the necessary action to support this plan'.

¹⁴⁵ Wilkinson attended a meeting of the War Cabinet on 3 June. Fraser highlighted the manpower shortage and that no reinforcements would be sent to either Division. Wilkinson 'disclosed the fact that our Division would not normally be required for active operations this year' and prioritised commitments as Air Force, Navy and Army. McIntosh to Berendsen 9 June 1943, Ian McGibbon (ed.), Undiplomatic Dialogue, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1993, pp.26-27.

¹⁴⁶ Crawford, p.148. 'The Secretary of External Affairs, Alistair McIntosh, suspected that Barrowclough might have put the Americans up to writing a letter in order to bolster his position.' See also McGibbon, Undiplomatic Dialogue, pp.29-30 '... I am not at all convinced that Barrowclough did not put Harmon up to giving him this particular letter.'

¹⁴⁷ Crawford, p.148.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Halsey's request should not have come as a surprise to Puttick. He had met Halsey on 17 November 1942 in New Caledonia and recorded 'was personally impressed with determination energy and ability US Commanders and staff. Their intention is to use 3NZ Division offensively with NZ consent when ready if circumstances then permit but in meantime in garrison roles'. Archives NZ, AD12, Box 21 Secret Cables – E Puttick, Puttick to Park, 4 December 1942.

¹⁵⁰ Air Commodore R.V. Goddard wrote to Admiral Wilkinson expressing his surprise at Barrowclough's statement that this troops were required for active operations in 1943 and seeking an explanation. Wilkinson replied that 'present plan did not anticipate the engagement of Third Division before the end of the year but an early build up was desirable....'. Goddard was concerned that combat operations would

supported by Barrowclough's War Diary. An entry for 30 May noted a letter from Puttick advising of manpower difficulties and the possibility 3NZ Division would not be brought up to full strength. He noted that 'the matter is further complicated by confidential advice brought to me by Colonel Bassett from General Harmon's HQ. It appears that plans for the conduct of the war in the South Pacific until the remainder of the year 1943 contemplate the employment of 3NZ Div in an active role somewhere about the end of July.'¹⁵¹

Before the Division could be deployed for combat, Barrowclough had to certify to the Government that it was suitably equipped, trained and ready for combat. This reflects how cautious that government had become and how sensitive it was to the risk of excessive casualties. On 27 June the War Cabinet gave its approval for the Division to be deployed to the forward area, subject to Barrowclough's certificate.¹⁵²

On 17 July 1943 the War Cabinet formally recognised that 3NZ Division would have only two brigades and authorised a reorganisation. The plan was for both 2 and 3NZ Divisions to be maintained for as long as possible, but be allowed to shrink in size. Further reinforcements for either Division were to be suspended during 1943. The Division received final reinforcements, but other earmarked units were withheld.¹⁵³ Barrowclough pressed for an additional engineering¹⁵⁴ unit, more signals personnel and a field ambulance unit. He endorsed General Harmon's suggestion that only a squadron of tanks be sent, not the proposed battalion.¹⁵⁵ The issue of reinforcements continued to bedevil Barrowclough. He wrote bluntly to Army HQ that 'I cannot face a situation where no reinforcements are behind me without running the risk of being unable to fulfil the role allotted to me ... As I have tried to emphasise on numerous occasions I

mean he would be deprived of the personnel he sought from 3NZ Division. Archives NZ, EA 87/21/1 R.V. Goddard to Prime Minister, 15 July 1943.

¹⁵¹ War Diary, GOC 3NZ Division, 30 May 1943, p.1.

¹⁵² Archives NZ AD12, 28/15 War Cabinet to Minister of Defence, 27 June 1943.

¹⁵³ 38 Fd Regiment, 26 Fd Coy, 24 Fd Amb, Tank Squadron Group and Signals Section of the 37 Fd Regt, HQ 15 Brigade and a Convalescent Depot. Ibid., Army HQ to 3NZ Division, 28 June 1943.

¹⁵⁴ Barrowclough foresaw that island and jungle warfare would pose engineering problems and advocated for the Third Field Company to be retained. This proved well grounded and Third Field Company was reorganised on Guadalcanal to include heavy earthmoving equipment. The engineers were involved in road and bridge construction, construction of camps, assistance with amphibious operations etc. Archives NZ, EA 28, 28/15/4. Col J.I. Brooke, Reorganisation of Div Engineers, 5 March 1944.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., Barrowclough to Army HQ, 25 June 1943.

feel it is absolutely essential to the morale of this Force that we should not decline the role that has been allotted to us.’¹⁵⁶

15 Brigade was deployed to New Caledonia with the intention of it being fully built up with units sent from New Zealand. However, the need to give furlough to long-serving men in 2NZ Division arose. The demand for furlough replacements and the expansion of the RNZAF meant that the units were unavailable. Other sources of manpower such as Maori and Fijian soldiers were explored but didn’t materialise.¹⁵⁷ Reluctantly on the part of Wellington, Barrowclough and COMSOPAC the reality of a two-brigade 3NZ Division was accepted and on 1 July 1943, 15 Brigade was disbanded and its men used to fill the ranks of the other two Brigades and to act as a reinforcement pool.¹⁵⁸ Halsey told Fraser that he was greatly disappointed that New Zealand could not furnish a division with three full brigades and accepted two brigades with great reluctance.¹⁵⁹ Barrowclough's reorganisation of his Division¹⁶⁰ resulted in the shedding of much of its cumbersome heavy artillery, which was taken over by American forces under Reverse Lend Lease¹⁶¹ or returned to New Zealand.¹⁶² This reorganisation radically altered the Division’s character, making it lighter, more easily deployed and more focussed on its infantry elements. In late 1943 it had reached its apogee.¹⁶³ It was clear that it would not receive further reinforcements and that it would retain a two-brigade structure. On that basis, it moved to Guadalcanal in three groups on 27 August, 3 September and 14 September 1943 to await combat deployment.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., Barrowclough to Army HQ, 7 July 1943.

¹⁵⁷ The opportunity of bringing his Division up to full strength by incorporating Fijian soldiers was potentially both a blessing and a curse for Barrowclough. The Fijian soldiers would have needed 'a considerable amount of training' before they were ready for combat. Meanwhile it was contemplated that in exchange two of Barrowclough's trained battalions would be despatched to the Middle East. Barrowclough wrote to Puttick setting out his views on 24 May 1943. War Diary GOC 3NZ Division, 30 May 1943.

¹⁵⁸ Gillespie, p.111.

¹⁵⁹ Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15 Halsey to Fraser, 21 August 1943.

¹⁶⁰ As Barrowclough reported to Fraser 'it was necessary to adopt some very radical changes in the composition and organisation of 3NZ Division'. In addition to the disbandment of 15 Brigade, 33rd Heavy Regiment and 28th Heavy AA Regiment were disbanded and the troops available were used to fill the ranks of the units remaining, to provide a reinforcement pool for the Division and to satisfy a requirement to provide 400 men for the RNZAF. Archives NZ EA28, 28/15/4 Barrowclough to Fraser, 31 December 1943.

¹⁶¹ Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15 Vol III Army HQ to HQNZEF IP, 14 July 1943.

¹⁶² In the case of 3.7inch Heavy AA Guns. Ibid Army HQ to NZEF IP, 14 July 1943.

¹⁶³ Appendix C Table of Organisation 3NZ Division.

The development and deployment of the Division was marked by confusion as to its purpose, miscommunication and obfuscation, and shifting agendas. It evolved from an artillery heavy unit into an under-strength infantry-based one, albeit with a tank squadron and supporting elements. Its under-strength nature and the fact that no reinforcements were forthcoming severely limited its combat utility. The failure to adopt American weaponry and equipment was also a powerful impediment to its utilisation and meant it depended upon a complex logistic chain stretching back to New Zealand. A desire to quiet Australian criticisms of lack of commitment to the Pacific War, satisfy internal New Zealand demands, show the British flag in the South Pacific and earn a place at the peace table all influenced decision making.

CHAPTER 3: COMMAND AND CONTROL

The history of 3NZ Division is linked inextricably with that of its principal commander,¹ Major General Harold Eric Barrowclough. This chapter assesses his contribution to the Division's development, addresses his relationship with Army Headquarters in Wellington, compares and contrasts his situation with that of General Freyberg, commander of 2NZ Division, and examines his role in 3NZ Division's combat operations.

Superficially Barrowclough appears an unlikely choice to command a division tasked with offensive operations. Wartime photographs show him immaculately dressed, bespectacled, somewhat intense, with an intellectual air.² Yet those photos do not show the battle-hardened warrior,³ whose military career spanned two world wars and saw him rise from Private to Major General, no mean feat for a 'citizen soldier'. Born in Masterton in 1894, he joined the Territorials while a law student in Dunedin. In 1915 he enlisted and served in France,⁴ rising to command a battalion of the New Zealand Rifle Brigade in 1918 at the age of 24. He distinguished himself at Le Quesnoy,⁵ conducting a personal reconnaissance and leading from the front. He received the D.S.O., Military Cross and Croix de Guerre and gained a reputation as an outstanding combat commander.⁶ In peacetime Barrowclough remained in the Territorials and was Colonel of the Third Infantry Brigade in 1931 when he resigned his commission to move to Auckland. Barrowclough was deeply concerned at the interwar decline in New

¹ Major General Owen Mead had briefly commanded 3NZ Division before his death on 25 July, 1942; Prior to him, Major General Cunningham had commanded the two Brigade Groups in Fiji informally referred to as 3NZ Division before being invalided home in March 1942.

² Geoffrey Cox described Barrowclough on the eve of Crusader as being 'deceptively slight, bespectacled, precise, making it difficult to envisage him as the young platoon commander who at the age of twenty-one had won the MC in ugly trench fighting'. Geoffrey Cox, A Tale of Two Battles, London: William Kimber & Co, 1987, p.159.

³ W.E. Murphy described him as 'a high minded and fearless leader.... ready to attack Germans wherever and whenever he found them on the battlefield'. W.E. Murphy, The Relief of Tobruk, Wellington: War History Branch, 1961, p.72.

⁴ Glyn Harper, Spring Offensive, Auckland: Harper Collins, 2003, p.123. Harper describes how Captain Barrowclough carried out a 'brilliant minor operation' which took ground at little cost in 1918 on the Somme.

⁵ Col. H Stewart, The New Zealand Division 1916 – 1919, Uckfield, East Sussex: The Naval and Military Press, Reprint of 1920 Edition, pp.586-613.

⁶ Personnel File H.E. Barrowclough, NZ Army Base Records, Trentham. Also John Crawford, 'Major General Sir Harold Barrowclough: Leadership and Command in Two World Wars' in Glyn Harper and Joel Hayward (eds), Born To Lead?, Auckland: Exisle Publishing Limited, 2003, pp.144 – 63.

Zealand's defence capabilities. He resurrected the defunct⁷ Defence League of New Zealand because he foresaw another war in Europe and 'as a loyal supporter of the Empire I wished New Zealand to be ready to assist the Mother Country when the need arose'.⁸ This conflicted with the anti-militarism of the New Zealand Labour Government elected in 1935,⁹ and showed a willingness to take unpopular positions.¹⁰ His legal partner was one of the four Colonels in the Territorials dismissed in 1938 for protesting publicly at the Government's downsizing of the Territorial Force.¹¹ Barrowclough was viewed by some as the 'Fifth Colonel', which earned him few friends within the establishment.

On the outbreak of war Barrowclough was commissioned as a Brigadier.¹² He possibly hoped to command 2NZ Division¹³ and along with other Territorial officers, apparently thought Freyberg was not the sort of 'real' New Zealander to whom the job should be given.¹⁴ Barrowclough clearly desired divisional command,¹⁵ but instead commanded 6 Infantry Brigade, 2NZ Division between May 1940 and February 1942. He closely supervised the training of units,¹⁶ and these efforts bore fruit in Greece in 1941, where the Brigade had to retreat under constant pressure, particularly aerial attack, but was successfully evacuated to Egypt.¹⁷ In November 1941 the Brigade suffered severe losses during Operation Crusader, the 8th Army offensive aimed at relieving Tobruk,

⁷ The original Defence League had called for the introduction of compulsory military training and had disbanded when this had been achieved in 1909. Barrowclough's Defence League failed because his message was unpopular. The League was eventually taken over by the RSA.

⁸ J.T. Henderson, Interview with H.E. Barrowclough, November 1969, unpublished manuscript, p.4.

⁹ 'Some Labour party supporters were so suspicious of what they felt was a fascist body they urged the annual Party Conference to pass a remit for the suppression of the League'. W. David McIntyre, New Zealand Prepares for War – Defence Policy 1919-39, Christchurch: Caxton Press, 1988, p.231.

¹⁰ In 1939 General Duigan, annoyed by Barrowclough's continued activities on behalf of the Defence League, sent him a letter which Barrowclough regarded as 'my virtual dismissal'. R.J.C. Stone, The Making of Russell McVeagh, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1991, p.132.

¹¹ Laurie Barber, 'The New Zealand Colonels' Revolt', The New Zealand Law Journal, December 1977, pp.496-502.

¹² Barrowclough's perception was that there was 'a strong and bitter campaign on the part of certain senior officers of the Staff Corps to prevent both he and the four Colonels being reinstated'. Stone, p.133.

¹³ J.T. Henderson, Interview with Major General W. G. Stevens, 6 and 9 June 1969, unpublished manuscript, p.11. Stevens was secretary to the Organisation for National Security and later Chief Administrative Officer of 2NZEF. Stevens believed this, but acknowledged he had no proof.

¹⁴ Henderson, Barrowclough Interview, p.19.

¹⁵ Two things would have made this unlikely. Barrowclough's command experience had been limited to that of a Colonel in World War I and he had not undertaken the specialist staff officers training in Britain or India.

¹⁶ Crawford, p.150.

¹⁷ W.G. McClymont, To Greece, Wellington: Historical Publications Branch, 1959. Referring to the initial retreat – 'the march was performed in magnificent style fully justifying the attention the Brigadier had given to long route marches during the training period in Egypt', p.183.

but it fought tenaciously.¹⁸ Barrowclough sealed his reputation as a superb combat commander,¹⁹ able to think clearly under great stress, inspiring confidence in those around him.²⁰

When consulted on a commander for 3NZ Division,²¹ Freyberg had no hesitation in recommending Barrowclough.²² Barrowclough was reluctant to leave because he considered himself Freyberg's likely successor if the latter was promoted and appreciated that it was unlikely that New Zealand could sustain two divisions.²³ However, he obeyed orders and returned to New Zealand, only to find that command of 3NZ Division had been given to Major General Mead.²⁴ He was extremely angry and initially considered demanding to be returned to North Africa. He rejected command of the South Island Home Defence Division in favour of his home area of Northland. This was the most likely area of Japanese invasion and he characteristically threw his energies into forming units, training and welding them into an effective fighting force.²⁵ He then surveyed the defences and submitted a plan to Wellington. He noted that '... I did not receive a reply or even an acknowledgement'.²⁶

Barrowclough proudly saw himself as a Territorial officer.²⁷ Permanent Force officers, many of whom occupied powerful staff positions, tended to look askance at 'part-time' soldiers in high ranks.²⁸ Barrowclough believed that Duigan, Puttick's predecessor as Chief of General Staff, had been prejudiced against Territorials. Barrowclough noted that 'I wouldn't have served overseas with Duigan, and I don't think many Territorial

¹⁸ Richard Humble, Crusader, London: Leo Cooper, 1997, p.164.

¹⁹ Murphy, Tobruk, pp.286-96.

²⁰ Crawford, p.156. See also Cox, p.200.

²¹ The War Cabinet indicated a preference for an officer from 2NZ Division for the Fiji Command.

Puttick suggested 'that only Barrowclough, Inglis or Kippenberger would be suitable command division in Fiji...' In the meantime he recommended Mead for the Fiji command. Archives NZ, AD12, Box 21, Secret Cables E Puttick, Puttick to Freyberg, 16 February 1942.

²² Owen Gillespie, The Pacific, Wellington: War History Branch, 1952, pp.45-46.

²³ Henderson, Barrowclough Interview, p.9.

²⁴ It could not have escaped Barrowclough's notice that Mead was a Permanent Force soldier.

²⁵ Henderson, Barrowclough Interview, pp.10-11.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.11.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.9.

²⁸ This situation was not unique to New Zealand. In Australia there was a sharp divide between the full time Staff Corps Officers and Militia Officers, complicated by the acute shortage of officers to command the newly created AIF units and the tribalism of the Officer Corps. Jeffrey Grey, The Australian Army, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp.111-12. The Militia had to put up with the AIF perceived sense of superiority over them. Albert Palazzo, Defenders of Australia – The Third Australian Division, Canberra: Department of Defence, 2002, p.98.

Officers would'.²⁹ He believed that in peacetime 'a marked jealousy between the Staff Corps and the Territorial Officers had developed'.³⁰

Mead's unexpected death led to Barrowclough's appointment to command 3NZ Division. On 11 August 1942 he was instructed to prepare it for offensive operations in the South Pacific by 25 August 1942,³¹ an impossible task as the troops scattered around New Zealand on leave and at various camps. In terms of divisional staff, Barrowclough had Col J. Brooke-White, CRE and Brigadier C Duff, CRA, who had experience from the Desert War. Many of the rest of his officers were veterans of World War I, some physically unfit and most lacking recent combat experience. Those that had been in Fiji had received little or no training in operations larger than a battalion³² and there was little sense of unit cohesion, let alone divisional identity. Men had to be given uniforms, equipped, trained, inoculated and vaccinated, all under the pressure of time.

One of Barrowclough's major achievements was to make 3NZ Division capable of complex combat operations in a tropical environment. The Division consisted initially of soldiers from 8 and 14 Brigade Groups, who were fit primarily for static warfare,³³ together with hastily raised units that were generally ill-equipped and untrained. He firstly purged the Division of unfit, inadequate or elderly officers and promoted younger and more energetic men. This had a beneficial effect on morale³⁴ but many of the purged senior officers were retained in New Zealand in administrative or staff positions and harboured no love for Barrowclough. Secondly, he ensured that his men were thoroughly trained.³⁵ He devised a training exercise in the Kaimai Ranges for two brigades ('the Battle of the Kaimais'), one defending and one attacking, based on the Australian experience on the Kokoda Track. As he had with 6 Brigade, Barrowclough organised and led a route march. A Captain with 30 Battalion considered that

²⁹ Henderson, Barrowclough Interview, p.20.

³⁰ Stone, p.133.

³¹ War Cabinet Minute, 11 August 1942.

³² Archives NZ AD 12 28/15/1 Barrowclough to Army HQ, 20 August 1942

³³ Archives NZ, AD series 12, 28/15/1, Barrowclough memo to Army HQ, 20 August, 1942.

³⁴ The Third Division Histories Committee, Headquarters, Dunedin: AH & AW Reed, 1947, p.21.

³⁵ Barrowclough noted that 'It was very apparent on my taking over the command of the Fijian Force that it had not had experience of modern tactical roles. That lack of experience has been overcome during the six months of fairly strenuous work on this Island (New Caledonia).' War Diary GOC 3NZ Division, 30 May 1943.

The jungle exercise was well conceived, I believe by Barrowclough, and the mass route march to the base of the Kaimais in the Matamata area was an excellent boost to lead into the exercise proper. I think this exemplified Barrowclough's class in appreciating the need to lift morale and also to bring to all the new and old members of the force a sense of unity.³⁶

Lessons were learned in air/ground cooperation, logistics and engineering,³⁷ but above all consolidation of 3NZ Division was begun.³⁸

The Division was then deployed to New Caledonia, where 'Everyone trained ... There was no option, since, it was an instruction that all ranks of every branch and headquarters even the less conspicuous element such as cooks and batmen must undergo a fitness campaign and march certain distances.'³⁹ Barrowclough directed that the Division be trained in jungle warfare⁴⁰ and this began 'always with an eye to combat in the Solomons'.⁴¹ Route marches over difficult terrain were designed to increase fitness levels. Exercises Styx, Sylla and Tonta involved river crossings, beach landings and mountain warfare between early to mid 1943. Exercise Taniwha was directed by Barrowclough and intended to train signals personnel under field conditions.⁴² Training was multi-dimensional, from Training Exercises Without Troops (TEWT) for senior officers conducted at brigade and divisional level, through to specialised unit training such as Exercises Bobo and Kongo.⁴³ Lessons were learned – 'New Zealanders of 3 Division, for the first time in history preparing for jungle and island warfare, were practically writing their own text books as their training progressed'.⁴⁴ Operation Cyclops involved landing practice for 8 Brigade and Divisional Headquarters Staff. Training in embarkation and landing paid dividends later. Further training on the New Hebrides honed amphibious operations skills.⁴⁵ Barrowclough showed an interest even in tactical training. Visiting 15 Brigade, he saw their machine gun pits were badly

³⁶ Narrative written by Lindsay Adams. Authors Collection.

³⁷ A conference was held in the aftermath of the exercise to discuss lessons. Archives NZ WAI DAZ121/1/28.

³⁸ Archives NZ, WAI D 305/1/67, Report on Kaimai Exercise.

³⁹ Gillespie, p.98.

⁴⁰ Archives NZ, AD 28/5, Vol. II, Barrowclough to Army HQ, 23 January 1943.

⁴¹ Gillespie, p.99.

⁴² Archives NZ WAI, DAZ 121/1/1/2.

⁴³ These involved 36 Battalion and 29 Battalion. Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 154/1/17-18.

⁴⁴ Gillespie, p.101.

⁴⁵ Exercise Efate

constructed, AA guns misplaced and the laying of barbed wire ineffective. He pointed this out to the Brigadier and noted 'On the whole the exercise should have proved of immense value as all arms saw a number of mistakes which it is hoped will not be repeated'.⁴⁶ Further training on Guadalcanal involved 3NZ Division Tank Squadron.⁴⁷

One of Barrowclough's problems was the undetermined purpose of the Division. He had been told it would be used for offensive operations, yet it was encumbered with heavy coastal defence batteries.⁴⁸ He pressed for a configuration in the style of the usual British infantry-based division with supporting elements.

Negotiations concerning the composition of these forces were in progress before Barrowclough's appointment and continued long afterwards. No New Zealand commander, faced with the responsibility of taking combat troops overseas, was ever so harassed by proposals, uncertainty, and indecision, all of which despite his initiative and capacity for detailed planning, hindered him from re-organising his division and training it to that desired state of efficiency required for an unusual campaign such as island war in the tropics. No details of the precise character of the operations were available to him, which was no fault of the New Zealand Army authorities....⁴⁹

These uncertainties caused friction between Barrowclough and Army Headquarters in Wellington.⁵⁰ Another source of friction was the understrength nature of 3NZ Division, which eventually led to the disbandment of 15 Brigade.

John Crawford has emphasised Barrowclough's difficulties with senior Army

⁴⁶ War Diary GOC 3NZ Division, 2 June 1942.

⁴⁷ Such training was not without its perils. A demonstration to Barrowclough of the indirect fire techniques of the tanks came to an abrupt halt when a misfire landed close to Barrowclough's group. Jeffrey Plowman, Rampant Dragons – New Zealanders in Armour in World War II, Christchurch: Kiwi Armour, 2002, pp.42-43.

⁴⁸ '[A]n organisation unique in the history of British Arms'. Gillespie, p. 77. Barrowclough protested about the immobility of 3.7 howitzer and 155mm guns and argued vigorously for more 25 pounder guns. Archives NZ, AD 28/15, Vol. 1 Barrowclough to Army HQ, 27 August 1942.

⁴⁹ Gillespie, p.75.

⁵⁰ Archives NZ, EA1, 85/1/1, Lt General E. Puttick, The Defence of New Zealand, Wellington: Government Printer, 1943, pp.15-16. During World War II the New Zealand Army was commanded by the General Officer Commanding with the rank of Lt. General. He exercised command through staff based in Wellington. The General Staff dealt with planning, intelligence and training matters. The Adjutant-General's Branch dealt with pay, discipline, medical matters and POW's. The Quarter-Master General's Branch dealt with food, equipment, stores, road and rail movements. The GOC was the main adviser to the War Cabinet and held critically important roles with the Army Board and the Chiefs of Staff Committee.

commanders, arguing that he was in conflict not only with the Japanese, but also Lieutenant General Puttick and Army HQ in Wellington.⁵¹ While attributing this partly to stresses surrounding the Division's uncertain future and scarcity of resources, Crawford maintains that Barrowclough had resented the attitude of some New Zealand Regular Army officers during the 'four Colonels' incident, and had blamed their personal animosity for opposition to his appointment as a brigade commander in 2NZ Division. He was annoyed at Mead's appointment to command 3NZ Division and 'may well have thought that this was another example of regular officers conspiring against him'. In 1942 there was a prolonged dispute with headquarters over his rate of pay. Crawford notes that

Puttick was a rather eccentric man, and many people found it difficult to establish a good relationship with him. Barrowclough's litigious tendencies, which led him to debate decisions Puttick had made, did not endear him to the conservative Chief of General Staff. Finally, Barrowclough's relations with Army Headquarters as a whole were not helped by his brusque manner, which upset a number of senior officers and obliged Puttick to remonstrate with him. In December 1942, for instance, an exasperated Puttick asked Barrowclough, 'Would you please remember we are backing you up all we can and that no consideration of Home Defence will prevent us doing all we can to further a forward policy in the Pacific.'⁵²

The relationship between Puttick and Barrowclough seems to be epitomised by Puttick's statement to Freyberg in late 1944 that although he considered Barrowclough had 'lots of ability' and 3NZ Division had performed satisfactorily, he was 'very glad to be rid of such a disturbing individual'.⁵³ He had found Barrowclough 'most difficult, querulous and complaining as Commander 3 Div.' and alleged he had shown strong prejudice against Regular Army Officers and upset senior commanders at Army HQ.

Clearly, there was conflict between Barrowclough and Puttick, but this has to be seen in context and measured against that of other Allied commanders in similar circumstances.

⁵¹ John Crawford 'A Campaign on Two Fronts – Barrowclough in the Pacific' in John Crawford (ed.) Kia Kaha – New Zealand in the Second World War, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp.140-59.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp.144-45.

⁵³ Archives NZ, Puttick Papers 5/2, Liaison Letters Puttick and Freyberg. Note by Puttick, 19 October 1944.

Puttick's personality has also to be taken into account. He had been a career soldier for most of his adult life, nicknamed 'The Red Hun' for his red hair⁵⁴ and also his temper. He was said to suffer from 'a Public Works mentality'.⁵⁵ Puttick also had differences with Fred Jones, the Minister of Defence, and was disliked by Gordon Coates. The Adjutant General, Brigadier Conway noted that he had to attend meetings that Puttick should have attended.⁵⁶ Air Vice Marshall Leonard Isitt knew him from the First World War and saw him as 'the sort of man who was never satisfied – who would always drive on in search of an 'ultimate solution'. Although having a good brain and clear mind, he thought Puttick was verbose and always looking for work, and if he couldn't find it he would create it.'⁵⁷ Ironically both Puttick and Barrowclough were good administrators. Puttick's role in the Colonels' Revolt had been to support the Labour Government and insist that the Colonels be suspended as an example to the army.⁵⁸ He would have been aware of Barrowclough's viewpoint and Barrowclough would have been aware of his. There is, however, no overt evidence that this caused problems in their relationship. Barrowclough was also a formidable personality. He had been trained as a lawyer and would in his post-war years occupy the top position of Chief Justice.

To Puttick's consternation, Barrowclough insisted on a Charter similar to Freyberg's, which defined his role and gave him access to Fraser and the New Zealand Government. Puttick saw this as an attempt to minimise control from Army Headquarters.⁵⁹ He believed that the operations of the Division would occur close to New Zealand and any problems could be referred to Wellington. Barrowclough

asked Puttick if I could take my case to the Prime Minister. Puttick said that if I wanted to see the Prime Minister that was my business, but he would have nothing to do with it. Thus I went alone to see Fraser, who immediately asked where Puttick was, and on being informed that Puttick knew of my visit but had refused to accompany me, he phoned Puttick and asked him to come

⁵⁴ W.David McIntyre, 'Puttick, Edward', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Vol.5, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2000, pp.425-26.

⁵⁵ J.T. Henderson, Interview with Brigadier A.E. Conway, undated, unpublished manuscript, pp.12-13.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.12-13.

⁵⁷ J.T. Henderson, Interview with Air Vice Marshall Sir Leonard Isitt, December 1969, unpublished manuscript, p.11.

⁵⁸ McIntyre, 'Puttick', p.425.

⁵⁹ Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15/1 Puttick to Jones, 1 November 1942. Puttick viewed Barrowclough's drafts as going 'much too far and in fact make him independent of Army H.Q.'.

immediately to his office. Before a very red faced Puttick the Prime Minister asked me if I had charter. I replied that I did not, but that I felt I needed one.

Fraser asked me to draw up a charter and present it to him the following day⁶⁰.

Barrowclough's charter 'was accepted in its entirety by Fraser. From my point of view this was particularly satisfying as I was granted direct contact with Government and not only with Army HQ as Puttick had wished'⁶¹. Barrowclough had outmanoeuvred Puttick, and for someone with 'a Public Works mentality', this was not likely to be forgiven.

Barrowclough was responsible for pushing the interests of the Division, and it was Puttick's job to allocate resources. At times they co-operated well,⁶² and at other times they were in conflict. Barrowclough had an abiding feeling that the Division was getting short changed by Army HQ. For example, he made recommendations for the distribution of medals arising from combat in the Solomons, but it took a return to New Zealand and further pushing of Army HQ before they were awarded.⁶³

The frictions between Barrowclough and Army Headquarters are illustrated by the wireless set problem. The Division found that radios were badly affected by tropical humidity. In New Zealand the Signals Experimental Establishment researched such problems. Barrowclough pressed it and Headquarters to provide 'ovens' to keep the sets dry, but received what he considered a curt response from Brigadier Gentry – 'Your 26/4QSEP14 No Ovens Designed.' Incensed, he wrote to Puttick:

I am sure you will be as dissatisfied as I am with the curt information we have received from the Signals Experimental Station through the GS Branch. Am I to assume that the Experimental Station is not interested in this problem and has no intention of helping us? I can scarcely draw any other conclusion; especially as we have been raising this question with Senior Signals Officers for well over 6 months and had never had a report from them as to the progress they are making

⁶⁰ Henderson, Barrowclough Interview, p.12.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² For example Army HQ made available to 3NZ Division personnel in 1943 priority places in courses held at Army School, Trentham, AFV School Waiouru, Tactical School, Wanganui, and Staff College at Palmerston North. Archives NZ WAIL, 1, DAZ 121/1/1/3, Appendix 18.

⁶³ Interview with Joan Clouston, 2003. See also Archives NZ, WAIL. 9, S1 'I note that nothing positive has been learnt about our Periodic Awards, nor about the 1939-43 Star'. Barrowclough to Conway, 27 June 1944.

unless we send someone over to get it, and even then apparently he is misled by promises which do not appear to have been implemented.

Barrowclough then touched on problems with the supply of ZC1 Sets:

I am sure you will agree with me that I have been very badly served by these people in the whole matter of signal equipment.

I mention these matters to you in this personal letter because I feel that you have not been informed of the circumstances and, unpleasant though it is for me, you are not likely to be informed unless I write to you as I have done.⁶⁴

Puttick provided Barrowclough with reports from Signals officers, which only incensed him further. He complained that:

The reports, however, are so misleading and so incorrect that I feel compelled to answer them in some detail so that you may really know the position.

I do not think it incorrect to say that the tenor of those reports is that 'here is another groundless complaint by 3rd Division against a Branch of Army HQ which has done all that is humanly possible to help them.'

Barrowclough took Colonel Ashe to task for the statement that 'Army HQ was justified in concluding either that there was no demand or that they (3NZ Division) would improvise their own which they would have little difficulty in doing.' He declared 'a more ridiculous statement I cannot imagine' and pointed out the practical difficulties of improvising technical solutions in the jungle. He then set out his complaints in detail and concluded by saying that:

I made a complaint regarding the non-supply of some device for drying wireless sets and this complaint you investigated. The reports you received led you, I think, to the view that my complaint was groundless. It was necessary to challenge those reports in some detail if I was to justify my conviction that in respect of these ovens we were badly let down. There is much more in the reports which I could criticise but I hope that I have said enough to enable you to judge where the fault lies.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Archives NZ, Puttick papers, 5 W1427/5, Barrowclough to Puttick, 2 October 1943.

⁶⁵ Archives NZ, Puttick 5 W1427/5, Barrowclough to Puttick, 8 November 1943.

Puttick replied at length 'For the sake of clearing up any misunderstanding'. He described Barrowclough's criticism of the Experimental Station as 'a real rebuff to a body of men who have shown extreme keenness to help and whose work is 90% for 3 Div.' He explained that he had instructed staff to keep telegrams brief and 'there was, of course, not the slightest intention on Gentry's part to be curt.' If Barrowclough considered the Signals Experimental Establishment of little use, it would be reduced in size. He concluded:

I must confess that I have been very much disturbed, over a long period now, at what appeared to me to be fairly clear indications of want of confidence in Army HQ and in our frequent assurances that we are doing our best to help you. You yourself refer to this in your reference to 'here is another groundless complaint by 3rd Division' and I must say that we seem to have received far more complaints than otherwise in connection with the vast amount of work involved in meeting 3 Div. requirements. Some things are bound to go wrong and mistakes of commission and omission will occur despite all care, but it rather seems that any or all of these are immediately attributed to incompetence here with little regard to the circumstances which may make them unavoidable. Perusal of accounts of overseas operations, especially where various services and Allies are concerned, show many instances of short supply, delayed production, faulty performance of equipment, and bad loading and packing, all of which we also have experienced. On the other hand, despite our shortcomings we do seem to have provided you with 99.9% of your essential requirements in a reasonably satisfactory manner, and trust we may continue to do so.⁶⁶

Barrowclough also complained about the inferior condition of motor vehicles⁶⁷ and the

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Archives NZ AD 28/15 Vol. III, Barrowclough to Army HQ, 30 November 1942. Barrowclough was justified in his concerns. The fighting ability of his Division was likely to be dependant upon its tactical mobility particularly if the Division had to defend against a Japanese invasion of New Caledonia. Many of the vehicles had been requisitioned from private owners and were in dubious mechanical condition and frequently lacked tool kits. An allegation made to Fraser (not by Barrowclough) that condemned and unserviceable vehicles had been sent to 3NZ Division resulted in an inquiry by the Quarter Master General. As a result only new four wheel drive vehicles were despatched to 3NZ Division. Archives NZ WAI, 28/15 Vol. 3 Quarter Master General to Prime Minister, 1 February 1943.

jungle uniforms⁶⁸ provided. New Zealand manufacturers had difficulty producing satisfactory dyed bush shirts and trousers for jungle use. Barrowclough pointed out to Puttick that the Americans were supplying these to their troops and that even the Japanese had solved the difficulty. He stressed the desirability of 'further investigating the excuses put forward by the Ministry of Supply. Their explanation sounds unconvincing.' He pointed out that 8 Brigade had to use uncomfortable painted jungle suits. He concluded that 'it seems likely that some New Zealand troops will continue to be engaged in the war against Japan for some time to come and most of the fighting will be done in hot jungle climates and I think an effort ought to be made to get a dyed suit. I am sorry to have to bother you with this matter but I cannot write to the QMG about it.'⁶⁹ Barrowclough clearly had difficulties with Headquarters and his appeals to Puttick may have affected the latter's relationship with his own staff.

One problem which Barrowclough had which Freyberg did not was that 3NZ Division was operating relatively close to New Zealand. Puttick could therefore take a greater degree of interest in its operations. There was also the factor of military seniority. Puttick had been under Freyberg's command and even though Puttick was now a Lieutenant General, he would have been considered militarily subservient to Freyberg as the fighting general commanding 2NZ Division. In contrast Barrowclough and Puttick had both been brigadiers in 2NZ Division. Barrowclough would not have been overawed by Puttick's promotion to Lieutenant General.

There is also the question of world view. Puttick unequivocally maintained that New Zealand's military effort should be aligned with that of Britain.⁷⁰ He favoured the despatch of the cream of New Zealand officers to India in 1943⁷¹ (the recommendation from the Lethbridge Mission) and his advocacy of the primacy of 2NZ Division contributed to its retention in the Mediterranean and the ultimate disbandment of 3NZ Division. Unsurprisingly Barrowclough did not agree with Puttick's viewpoint on

⁶⁸ War Diary GOC 3NZ Division, 9 September 1943.

⁶⁹ Archives NZ, Puttick 5 W1427/5.

⁷⁰ Archives NZ, Puttick Papers, Puttick to Barrowclough, 14 October 1943 'I think you know my views re the priority of the two divisions. I have always placed 2 Division first, not of course as an old love, but because of my conviction that Germany must be defeated first....'

⁷¹ Puttick in 1944 proposed that surplus 3NZ Division officers be sent to India, UK, and UK forces. Archives NZ Puttick Papers, Puttick 5, 27 Solution by Chief of General Staff, 5 September 1944.

this.⁷²

Yet there was a regular flow of correspondence, reports, memos and other communications between Barrowclough and Puttick that can be described as routine, polite, helpful and even concerned.⁷³ Puttick had been instrumental in the creation of 3NZ Division and it was not until manpower pressures became critical and the security of the New Zealand homeland had been achieved that Puttick clearly favoured 2NZ Division.⁷⁴ Indeed Barrowclough had approved of Puttick's appointment as a Lieutenant General.⁷⁵ It is arguable that the relationship soured only because of command pressures.

The conflict between Barrowclough and Puttick seems comparatively low key in relation to those of other Allied commanders.⁷⁶ In Malaya in 1941-42 General Percival found the Australian General Bennett 'more than a handful'.⁷⁷ The relationship between the Australian commander General Thomas Blamey and his divisional commanders was tension-filled⁷⁸ and Blamey's relationship with his American commander Douglas MacArthur bordered on the dysfunctional.⁷⁹ The latter's relationship with his senior American commander in New Guinea, Robert Eichelberger, can be considered to be abusive. During the fight for Buna, MacArthur told Eichelberger, 'I want you to take Buna, or not come back alive' and he churlishly intervened to prevent him receiving the

⁷² Crawford, 'Campaign', p.147. Central to his position was the belief that 'The Pacific, not Europe, is our real neighbourhood'.

⁷³ For example Puttick's handwritten note on Barrowclough's report on composition and organisation of 3 Division, 'Place before War Cabinet. I completely agree with Cmdr 3 Division. The urgent job is to complete 3 Division to full Division'. Archives NZ AD12, 28/15/1, 25 January 1943.

⁷⁴ Barrowclough and Puttick had been through the Greek Campaign and Desert War as brigadiers.

⁷⁵ War Diary H.E. Barrowclough entry – 30 April 1941, p5.

⁷⁶ A comparison can be made with Freyberg and Lt General Brian Horrocks. Horrocks in 1942 became exasperated because 'Freyberg queried every order he issued'. Niall Barr, Pendulum of War, London: Jonathan Cape, 2004, p.214.

⁷⁷ Brian P. Farrell, The Defence and Fall of Singapore 1940-1942, Stroud: Tempus Publishing Ltd, 2005, p.98. Bennett is described as having 'a blind prejudice against regular force officers' which was unfortunate as they made up most of his staff. This produced a nearly dysfunctional headquarters, p.98.

⁷⁸ There was the so-called 'Revolt of the Generals', with Robertson, Lavarack and Bennett seeking Blamey's job. D.M. Horner, High Command – Australia and Allied Strategy 1939-1945, Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1982, p.213. Major General J.A. Doe, US Army, described the Australian Army in 1944 as being 'riddled with politics', Brett Lodge, Lavarack: Rival General, St. Leonard's NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1998, p.262. Jeffery Grey sees conflict in the Australian Army as being generational and the result of animosity between the Militia and Staff Corps, Grey, p.136.

⁷⁹ MacArthur thought 'Blamey had had quite an easy time in New Guinea' and in January 1943 sought to have Blamey relieved from command of the Allied Land Force, New Guinea. Horner, p.248.

Congressional Medal of Honor.⁸⁰ The command arrangements between the American commanders in the Pacific, Nimitz and MacArthur, as overseen by George Marshall and the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, were Byzantine at best.⁸¹ The conflict between American Naval, Marine and Army Commanders in the Pacific at times threatened operational effectiveness.⁸² The British command relationships with Alanbrooke as Chief of Imperial General Staff were replete with tension⁸³ and British commanders in the Desert War were regularly replaced.⁸⁴ Similarly,

the only place that Canadian Generals let their hair down was in their internecine struggles over great issues of policy and for place and power. ... This war among the Generals might shock the naive, those who assume that war obliges everyone to work for a common cause without complaint. The cause was there, and it was shared by all, but just as politicians continue their struggles for office and, power during war time, so too do soldiers frequently fight for more than victory over the enemy. Human nature cannot be easily controlled'.⁸⁵

Yet such frictions were mild compared to those of their Axis or Soviet counterparts.⁸⁶ Seen in this light, the Barrowclough versus Puttick tensions were relatively minor. Whatever their personal differences, and however aggrieved they felt, both Barrowclough and Puttick were able to work together in a polite, albeit at times strained, way. There was never a hint of insubordination on Barrowclough's part and Puttick never had to 'pull rank'. At times Puttick supported Barrowclough strongly⁸⁷. For example, when Barrowclough sought to establish a third brigade, Puttick argued

⁸⁰ Paul Chwialkowski, In Caesar's Shadow - The Life of General Robert Eichelberger, Westport CT: Greenwood Press, 1993, pp.58, 74-75.

⁸¹ For a detailed examination of the politics of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, see Mark, A. Stoler, Allies and Adversaries - The Joint Chiefs of Staff, The Grand Alliance and US Strategy in World War II, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.

⁸² For example, the conflict between US Marine Corps General Holland Smith and the US Army General commanding 27 Division on Saipan. It is interesting how many of the US Commanders, ranging from Ernest King, 'Howling Mad' Holland Smith, Kelly 'Terrible' Turner and 'Vinegar Joe' Stilwell had reputations for fierce tempers. This is perhaps a reflection of the strain on senior commanders in wartime conditions.

⁸³ Field Marshall Lord Alanbrooke, War Diaries 1939-45, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001.

⁸⁴ Correlli Barnett, The Desert Generals, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982; Raymond Callaghan, Churchill and His Generals, Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2007.

⁸⁵ J.L Granatstein, The Generals - The Canadian Army's Senior Commanders in the Second World War, Toronto: Stoddart Publishing Co. Ltd, 1993, p.266.

⁸⁶ For the peculiarities of operating under a totalitarian system, see William J. Spahr, Stalin's Lieutenants - A Study of Command under Duress, Novato, CA: Presido Press, 1997.

⁸⁷ One very clear example is when Salmon reported that the Americans wanted to be informed of any proposed changes in command personnel. Puttick bluntly affirmed Barrowclough's right to appoint and remove his commanders. Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15 Puttick to Salmon, 8 December 1943.

successfully for this before the War Cabinet. Overall their co-operation generally outweighed their conflicts. The two appear to have only come into significant conflict in 1944 when Puttick favoured the retention of 2NZ Division at the expense of 3NZ Division.⁸⁸

Barrowclough's relationship with Puttick can be contrasted to his relationship with Rear Admiral T.S. Wilkinson, the Commander of Task Force 31. On a number of occasions Barrowclough wrote to Wilkinson regarding problems he was experiencing with American forces. Barrowclough's letters to Wilkinson are similar to his letters to Puttick. Examples are a letter of 3 October 1943 in which he complained of the refusal of LST Captains to disembark the Division's 40 mm guns and also detailed the frustrations of Commander Wilkinson, the Naval Base Commander on Vella Lavella⁸⁹, and a letter of 21 February 1944 regarding loading of LSTs.⁹⁰ Wilkinson replied to these letters cordially. Barrowclough seems to have attempted an unofficial, personal, approach to senior commanders to resolve problems.⁹¹ This worked with Wilkinson, but not with Puttick.⁹² There is no evidence of friction between Barrowclough and Nimitz, Halsey, Carney or any other senior American commander. Indeed their relationships seem to have been very positive⁹³.

Barrowclough prided himself as being a Territorial Officer but his success in rising to divisional command excited the envy of professional military officers, including those serving under him. A Liaison Officer at Divisional HQ had the impression that Brigadier Potter, a professional military officer, believed that he could do better than

⁸⁸ War Diary GOC 3NZ Division, 15 July to 31 July 1944, p.67. Barrowclough met Puttick and Puttick outlined his view that 2NZ Division should remain in Europe. 'It is obvious that his views are widely divergent from my own and the interests of those New Zealanders who are, and destined to be, members of the Pacific Force. I shall have to take very much a lone hand'.

⁸⁹ Archives NZ, WAI, 9, S9, Barrowclough to Wilkinson, 3 October 1943 Barrowclough felt ...'that a word from you in the right quarter will eliminate this unnecessary friction...'

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ For example Barrowclough's letter to Major General Breene concerning allegations of New Zealand hoarding of supplies being 'an entirely personal and unofficial note'. Archives NZ WAI, 9, S9 Barrowclough to Breene, 28 January 1944.

⁹² Archives NZ, AD 12 28/15/1.

⁹³ For example Rear Admiral Wilkinson referred in correspondence with Barrowclough to his 'renewed appreciation of our happy association in Green Island and in previous activities'. Archives NZ, WAI 9, S9 Wilkinson to Barrowclough, 26 February 1944. See also Archives NZ AD12, 28/2 Barrowclough to Army HQ 30 October 1944 where Barrowclough recounted his friendly visit to Admiral Nimitz in Hawaii and 'renewing my acquaintance with several old friends – notably Generals Harmon and Briene.

Barrowclough.⁹⁴ Given Barrowclough's need to rely on his brigadiers this could have created a potentially poisonous situation.

Because of the small size of the New Zealand Army it had to appoint talented territorial officers to high command. Those made brigadiers, such as Kippenberger, were successful. They were often lawyers who found their training in analysis and problem solving and ability to operate in high stress situations of immense value in combat.⁹⁵ One disadvantage was that territorial officers often lacked the specialised training needed to effectively command large units.⁹⁶ Barrowclough succeeded by virtue of hard won experience and by sheer hard work.

World War II established that a combined-arms approach melding infantry, armour, artillery and air power was the key to winning battles. 'Blitzkrieg' tactics were an example and the United States Marines experimented with Regimental Combat Teams and squad-level Fire Groups.⁹⁷ Seemingly independent of these developments, Barrowclough wrote about the idea of 'Combat Teams'. He had first-hand experience in North Africa of German tactical proficiency and been impressed by their combined-arms techniques. When given divisional command he was able to put his ideas into practice. It is also likely that his views were reinforced after encountering American forces. 34 Bn on Tonga that had been organised along such lines as a mobile striking group with infantry, mortars and artillery.⁹⁸

In August 1942 Barrowclough outlined his ideas to Army HQ:

For a long time I have been teaching that success in modern war against a resolute and well equipped enemy can be achieved only by a much closer co-ordination between infantry and artillery (and tanks if you can get them). I think, and I have long been teaching, that it is altogether wrong to consider the tactical handling of infantry as such in any unit larger than a platoon. I submit it

⁹⁴ Interview with Lindsay Adams 2006.

⁹⁵ Officers who were lawyers in civilian life also included Cunningham, Macky, Inglis, Kippenberger, Marshall and Powles. In 1942 174 solicitors and law clerks from the Auckland Law District were enlisted, which produced strains on many law firms. Stone, p.133.

⁹⁶ Gordon Corrigan, *Blood, Sweat and Arrogance*, London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2006, p.355. Corrigan was referring to British territorial officers.

⁹⁷ John A. English and Bruce I. Gudmundsson., *On Infantry*, Westport, CT: Praeger, 1994, pp.132-33.

⁹⁸ Gillespie, p.295.

is unsound to contemplate the employment of a company of infantry. One should employ a mixed team of infantry, mortars and guns. In battle a company command should never be a mere command of infantry. He should command a mixed team - a 'combat team' as it is sometimes called. This I think is the German method. It is shown in the provision of close support artillery regularly grouped with their infantry units and in large number of mortars with which their infantry are supplied. The organisation and equipment of the Japanese Army shows that they have studied and are no doubt familiar with the German methods. One of the mistakes of our British system is the tendency to over-centralise our artillery, tanks and aircraft. Few battalion commanders and still fewer company commanders have any real idea of how to command a mixed force. They tend to fight with their own arm alone, because we have not taught them to think in terms of commanding a combat team.⁹⁹

Barrowclough further developed his ideas on New Caledonia. 'In disposing his Division over vast stretches of country, the Brigade group was developed and from it the battalion combat team, which is a self contained force with an infantry battalion as a nucleus, supported by field, anti-tank and anti-aircraft artillery and including sections of engineers, field ambulance and ASC'.¹⁰⁰ Further training was undertaken at Efate, where the 'Brigades exercised in combat teams, as they were to operate later in action, taking even their field and anti-aircraft guns ashore in small barges and manhandling them into position over the sand.'¹⁰¹ The 37 Battalion Combat Team consisted of 1139 soldiers from 37 Battalion, a MMG Platoon, 35 Field Battery, 20 Field Company, 22 Field Ambulance, 16 Motor Transport Company and 207 Light Anti-Aircraft Battery.¹⁰²

What was innovative was that Barrowclough rapidly put the concept into practice. The New Zealand Army was not known for organisational innovation, and British structures predominated. The combat teams concept worked well on Vella Lavella where the heavy jungle limited visibility and control of units, fighting was relatively small scale, the prevalence of Japanese air power necessitated the presence of anti-aircraft units, and

⁹⁹ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/15 Vol. I, Barrowclough to NZ Army HQ, 27 August 1942. Cited in Gillespie, p.76.

¹⁰⁰ Gillespie, p.93.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p.117.

¹⁰² Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 155/1/18.

artillery and mortars were essential. Decentralisation and small-unit tactics were necessary. Unfortunately the approach also spawned command-and-control problems as lines of command for the melded units tended to get tangled. The concept was dropped in the Division's final combat operation on the Green Islands,¹⁰³ where there was less jungle.

Barrowclough faced some very different challenges from those confronting Freyberg. When Freyberg was appointed, three Brigades were raised sequentially and sent to Britain and the Mediterranean. There was time to solidify the Division and the best troops were sent to it. Conversely 3NZ Division was raised in New Zealand from a mixture of troops, some good quality, some not. Freyberg also had W.G. Stevens to take care of administrative 'bumpf'. Barrowclough did not have an equivalent, and certainly had a personal enthusiasm for administration. As commander of 6 Brigade, 'He was disinclined to delegate authority, and in this may have been influenced by the relative inexperience of his newly appointed BM, Major Barrington, on whose shoulders operational staff work would normally fall. Thus the main burden of work as of responsibility fell on Barrowclough and he welcomed it.'¹⁰⁴ His personal war diary provides evidence of his involvement in the day-to-day administration of 3NZ Division, largely leaving the operational and tactical decisions to his brigadiers. Barrowclough saw his role as administrative.¹⁰⁵ He considered that

ideally an expeditionary force should have two full Generals; a General to command the men in battle and an overall Commander of the expeditionary force. There is a good deal of political and administrative work in an expeditionary force which the 'tactical' commander should not be concerned with.... I spent the bulk of my time as an administrator rather than a fighter. In the first world war (sic) Godley both commanded the force in the field and was GOC of the expeditionary force. After Gallipolie (sic) Russell commanded the division and Godley the expeditionary force.¹⁰⁶

The impact of this can be seen as Barrowclough anxiously monitored the progress of

¹⁰³ Gillespie, p.178.

¹⁰⁴ Murphy, Tobruk, p.72.

¹⁰⁵ Henderson, Barrowclough Interview, p.20.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

Operation Goodtime but with much of his attention focussed on the running of his Division. He dryly recorded 'there was a similar invasion of VELLA LAVELLA (where Barrowclough had his H.Q.). Brigadiers Goss, Duff and Dove, Col Twigg and Major Solomon all arriving for consultations on matters of policy. A large portion of the day was devoted to discussions with them.'¹⁰⁷

Freyberg was a professional soldier whereas Barrowclough was a lawyer in uniform for the duration. Barrowclough was better educated,¹⁰⁸ but was somewhat reserved. Freyberg was certainly more charismatic, with the common touch. He appeared frequently in the front line, 'to ensure that his men had plenty of beer and cigarettes'.¹⁰⁹ Barrowclough did visit the front line and maintained regular contact with his brigadiers, but his focus on the administration of the Division invariably had an impact, as did the fact that it was spread out over widely separated islands. Barrowclough had to rely on the Americans for transport both by air and sea.¹¹⁰

Another contrast between Barrowclough and Freyberg was their security of tenure. One view of Freyberg is that his war record in World War One,¹¹¹ his patronage from Churchill and the growing concerns from the New Zealand Government over British handling of the war made Freyberg 'politically bullet proof. Freyberg's clout in Wellington and his friendship with Churchill gave him political leverage far beyond his rank'.¹¹² Despite the debacles in Greece, the loss of Crete (where Freyberg was Commander) and the near annihilation of the Division in the Desert War, Freyberg remained in place.¹¹³ Barrowclough had no such political clout, as is shown by the angry reaction of Fraser to the news from Barrowclough that the Americans required 3NZ Division for a combat role.¹¹⁴ If things had gone badly in the Pacific,

¹⁰⁷ War Diary GOC 3NZ Division, 27 October 1943, p.29.

¹⁰⁸ Barrowclough obtained a university degree whereas Freyberg did not.

¹⁰⁹ Douglas Porch, The Path To Victory, New York: Farrar, Straus and Group, 2004.

¹¹⁰ Barrowclough expressed his appreciation to Lt General Harmon for providing a plane so that Barrowclough could attend the amphibious training exercises at Efate in 1943, a task that he had had anticipated the RNZAF would have undertaken. Archives NZ WAI, 9, S9, Barrowclough to Harmon, 5 September 1943.

¹¹¹ Callaghan, p.248, n.31. Freyberg had received his first commission in 1914 in the Royal Naval Division with Churchill's help. His V.C. won on the Somme ensured him Churchill's lifelong admiration.

¹¹² Porch, pp.161-62.

¹¹³ After Crete a Court of Inquiry sat in Cairo and Fraser attended and was shaken by it. He canvassed British opinion and both Wavell and Auchinleck strongly supported Freyberg. Callaghan p74.

¹¹⁴ McIntosh to Berendsen, 16 June 1943, McIntosh Papers. Alexander Turnbull Library.

Barrowclough could have found himself replaced summarily.

On several occasions, 2NZ Division faced annihilation, and Freyberg could have lost it in one battle. In contrast, 3NZ Division operated at brigade level in combat, reducing the risk. For example, had the Japanese successfully counter-attacked the Treasury Islands in 1943, only one brigade would have been lost. This question of scale led to different attitudes towards battalion combat teams and operating at a brigade level. Freyberg believed the British commanders 'have at last come to the conclusion, rather by costly experience than as a result of argument, that the Brigade group system and the jock columns are a menace and a danger in both attack and defence. They have at last decided to fight divisions as divisions.'¹¹⁵ He argued that greater fighting power was generated on a divisional basis for the war of manoeuvre in the Western Desert. However, in the Solomons units had to operate on a much smaller level. Gavin Long described an interview with the commander of the Australian 9th Division in New Guinea:

Morshead picked up the day's Intelligence and Summary and read something like 'the gun at 965476 is now identified as a light AA gun. A Jap was killed by a booby trap at 543267' and gestured as much as to say what kind of war is this. He has come back from a war in which divisions fought as divisions, and artillery barrages on a maximum scale were used, to one in which it is news that there is one Jap gun in a certain area and a Jap scout is killed at a certain point.¹¹⁶

2NZ Division was effectively in combat from 1941-45 with brief periods out of the line, and its combat effectiveness waxed and waned as it took casualties and received reinforcements. In contrast, 3NZ Division was engaged in only three main combat operations, and its casualties were relatively light. It retained unit cohesion despite being starved of reinforcements. 2NZ Division was engaged in land operations, which lessened command-and-control problems. Supply points were close at hand and logistical infrastructure, such as ports, were commonplace. In contrast, Barrowclough's 3NZ Division fought on tropical islands with supply lines stretched over thousands of

¹¹⁵ Barrowclough, Private Papers, 4 August 1942.

¹¹⁶ Cited in John Coates, Bravery Above Blunder, Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1999, p.46.

miles and infrastructure often had to be created under pressure. Logistic and administrative matters were critical for Barrowclough. He was designated General Officer Commanding 2 NZEF in the Pacific which implied more than divisional command. Fortunately for Barrowclough he did not have the burden of commanding New Zealand Forces in Fiji, Tonga and Norfolk Island¹¹⁷.

2NZ Division was a significant asset in the Mediterranean and the national needs of the Division had to be taken into account.¹¹⁸ 3NZ Division was smaller and totally reliant on the Americans for planning, supply and transportation. The need for Barrowclough to get along with his American counterparts was therefore pronounced. No American Commander ever accused Barrowclough of being 'a prima donna'.

Freyberg was able to use Egypt as a training ground, but Barrowclough had to train his troops under pressure in New Zealand, New Caledonia, the New Hebrides and Solomons, and for significant periods all the Division was spread out from New Caledonia to the Solomons.¹¹⁹ Similarly, the movement of the main units of 3NZ Division from New Caledonia in 1943 resulted in Barrowclough's command becoming fractured. Base units remained on New Caledonia, a Rear Division H.Q. was established on Guadalcanal, and the main Divisional H.Q. was set up initially on Vella Lavella and later on the Green Islands.¹²⁰

Barrowclough's command style had to be largely indirect. His division fought on a brigade level and Barrowclough had to entrust operations to a large extent to his brigadiers and his battalion commanders. Barrowclough was not a 'chateau general'.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Archives NZ AD 12, 28/15/1, Adjutant General to Barrowclough, 19 November 1942

¹¹⁸ British Commanders in the Desert War often found this frustrating. Australian, New Zealand and South African divisional commanders had 'a very different constitutional and military relationship from the other forces within the Eighth Army'. Barr, p.46.

¹¹⁹ Barrowclough pointed out in 1942, 'I may be called upon to go into action immediately on landing at my destination and the problem confronting me is very different from and much more difficult than that which confronted General Freyberg when he took the 2NZEF out of this country to an admirable training ground in Egypt.' Archives NZ AD 28/15, Barrowclough to Army HQ, 1 September 1942.

¹²⁰ Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15/1 Part 4 3NZ Division Temporary Command & Staff Arrangements, undated 1943.

¹²¹ In World War I the administrative needs of massed armies required commanders and their staffs to be housed in the rear areas safe from shell fire. Commanders like Douglas Haig commandeered large chateaux. The problem was that Haig's distance from the Front meant he was unaware of conditions at the Front such as at Passchendaele. In World War II a similar problem existed with Douglas MacArthur particularly on Bataan and Buna.

Although administrative duties took up considerable time, Barrowclough did not tie himself to a desk at New Caledonia or Guadalcanal. An examination of his War Diaries shows that Barrowclough was in fairly constant movement, visiting units, attending conferences and liaising with the Americans and local civil authorities. At one point he moved forward with his staff to Vella Lavella by PT Boat and was conscious that the phosphorescent wake was an invitation to Japanese aerial attack.¹²² Because of his need for mobility, Barrowclough sought a plane for his personal use but this was denied.¹²³ As combat operations began, Barrowclough exposed himself to Japanese attack on a regular basis.

Located in Wellington Puttick could not have micromanaged 3NZ Division's operations but Barrowclough could have. Nonetheless, he generally avoided that. He expressed concern to Brigadier Row about deficiencies in the invasion plan for Operation Goodtime. Barrowclough did order Sgt. Cowan to undertake his patrols and report to him. Cowan recalled enjoying scones with Barrowclough on his return from his first patrol.¹²⁴ Barrowclough worried about the possibility of Japanese reinforcement or a counter-attack during Operation Goodtime and followed its progress intently.

John Keegan contends that a military leader needs a 'mask of command', made by himself in such a form as will mark him to 'men of his time and place as the leader they want and need'¹²⁵. Barrowclough's mask of command was at once heroic based on his World War One and Desert War experiences, but also unassuming and not self-dramatising. Barrowclough was on the surface austere and veterans have commented on his being a remote figure and seeing little of him. An observer considered that

He was seen as reserved and conservative, even shy, not one to curry favours of the Americans in any context. His human side did not come over to the division as he lacked the charisma of a Freyberg. Those not close to him in any way could find him stuffy or think him cautious. He was 'correct' in every way.¹²⁶

¹²² War Diary GOC 3NZ Division, 17 September 1943.

¹²³ Ibid., 13 September 1943. Barrowclough raised the subject with Air Vice Marshall Isitt who suggested that Army HQ should formally approach him with a request.

¹²⁴ Cowan Interviews. Author's Collection.

¹²⁵ John Keegan, The Mask of Command, New York: Viking Books, 1987, p.11.

¹²⁶ Lindsay Davidson narrative. Author's Collection.



Major General Barrowclough visits sick and wounded. Alexander Turnbull Library. 041530.

Undoubtedly Barrowclough's dealings were largely with his command structure and not with individual soldiers. He did, however, strive to achieve contact with his troops, for example, providing the Barrowclough Cup for rugby on New Caledonia. Nor was Barrowclough averse to contact with his soldiers. A veteran describes how just prior to Operation Squarepeg 'one day General Barrowclough O.C. the whole invasion force turned up unannounced to "char with the troops"'.¹²⁷ Barrowclough made a point of visiting the wounded. His diary records that 'I visited the CCS (Casualty Clearing Station) and saw all the patients there including our wounded from Vella Lavella'.¹²⁸ Barrowclough's style was not self promoting and he did not seek to generate personal publicity. His complaints were that there was insufficient media attention to the activities of his men. This lowered his personal profile. It is arguable that Barrowclough's reserve was very much a characteristic of New Zealand contemporary society.¹²⁹

A contemporary observed that 'these New Zealand Commanders were proud men, but

¹²⁷ Letter Frank Cox, 4 July 2000. Author's Collection.

¹²⁸ War Diary GOC 3NZ Division, 12 October 1943, p 26.

¹²⁹ New Zealand's most famous warrior Charles Upham, VC & Bar was similarly reserved. So also were Kippenberger and many of the Army's officers. Larger than life, pompous characters like MacArthur, Patton and Montgomery were not in evidence.

not vain men. They were of a generation of New Zealanders who rated reticence, and modesty of manner, as virtues.’¹³⁰

Barrowclough had a dry sense of humour. On Green Island he noticed that the HQ staff had begun growing beards. He insisted that these be removed but first had his staff photographed.¹³¹ A veteran described how in the invasion of Green Island he and his Battery had been struggling to emplace an AA gun. He saw three men in green uniform watching and somewhat irritatedly demanded they help, which they did. Later one of the men returned to say that the General sent his compliments on the positioning of the gun.¹³²

Barrowclough’s task as Divisional Commander was twofold. Firstly, he had to be a very efficient administrator, especially given its long logistic chain. Barrowclough had an awesome responsibility not only for the lives of his men, but to ensure that their health was not broken by the tropical conditions. The Division’s component parts had to work smoothly and in World War II that meant paper work. Barrowclough acknowledged that in the Pacific ‘I spent the bulk of my time as an administrator rather than a fighter’.¹³³ Secondly, he had to be a liaison point for the Americans and civil authorities. He had to earn their respect and trust. This meant that Barrowclough had to operate on a semi-political level, interacting with American commanders such as Halsey, Wilkinson, Carney and Nimitz. On New Caledonia Barrowclough interacted productively with the Free French administration.¹³⁴

In World War II New Zealand placed the cream of its army under Freyberg, a British General,¹³⁵ and sent those troops half a world away, but it did not relinquish complete control of them. There was an abiding fear that the Division would be decimated in

¹³⁰ Cox, p.159.

¹³¹ Interview with David Williams 2006. Also Joan Clouston Interviews. Author's Collection.

¹³² Interview with William Lawrence, 25 June 2000.

¹³³ Henderson, Barrowclough Interview, p.20.

¹³⁴ There was considerable conflict between the Free French and the Americans. Kim Munholland, Rock of Contention : Free French and Americans at War in New Caledonia 1940-45, New York: Berghahn Books, 2005.

¹³⁵ Although paid by the NZ Government, Freyberg continued to appear on the British Army List. Paul Freyberg, Bernard Freyberg VC - A Soldier of Two Nations, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1991, p.203. Since he was a British officer, this caused confusion and tension in his relationships with British generals.

some ill-advised British military adventure¹³⁶ or that New Zealand units would be broken up to ‘fill the line’ and thereby lose their national identity.¹³⁷ General Freyberg at his request had been given a charter¹³⁸ setting out how New Zealand troops could be used and when Wellington had to be consulted. Fraser was then shaken by the Balkans Campaign of 1941, in which 2NZ Division was committed to action without obtaining Wellington’s approval, and narrowly escaped destruction. Casualties were also high on Crete, which deeply disturbed Fraser.¹³⁹ It was even less likely that Wellington would allow the United States carte blanche in utilising New Zealand troops.

Barrowclough’s Charter stated that operational command was to be exercised by the United States Commander on New Caledonia and it authorised the splitting up of New Zealand forces. Furthermore, Barrowclough could command American forces and the willingness of American commanders to place their forces under his command contrasted with the reluctance of British commanders to have their forces under Australian or New Zealand commanders. In Greece the British Commander, General Wilson, commanded even though Blamey’s troops made up the majority of troops committed. Similarly, in the Desert War, it was never considered that a commander could be appointed from Commonwealth units.¹⁴⁰

Freyberg’s Charter noted his rather tangled line of communication with the British War Office and the New Zealand Liaison Officer in London. In contrast, Barrowclough’s Charter recorded that ‘Administratively and for all purposes other than operational’ he was ‘directly and solely responsible’ to the New Zealand Government. Because of the

¹³⁶ This was not without foundation. Winston Churchill presided over such notable British military disasters as Gallipoli, 1915, Norway 1940, Singapore 1941-42, Greece and Crete 1941 and the Dodcanese Campaign 1943 and he was the moving force behind the invasion of Italy in 1943. Many of Churchill’s more extreme military ideas were forestalled by his Generals. See Alanbrooke’s famous assessment of Churchill – ‘Without him, England was lost for certainty, with him England has been on the verge of disaster time and again.’ Alanbrooke, p.xxi.

¹³⁷ Freyberg, p.203. Freyberg came under just this pressure in Egypt in 1940, and successfully resisted. Puttick, however, in Freyberg’s absence, had allowed New Zealand’s units to be parcelled out amongst British units. Freyberg on his return insisted on their returning to 2NZ Division.

¹³⁸ New Zealand was not the only country to provide its commanders with a charter. The Canadians had an equivalent in the form of the Visiting Forces (British Commonwealth) Act 1933. In World War I General Douglas Haig had been given a charter by the British Government. See W.E. Murphy, Blamey’s and Freyberg’s Charters - A Study in Civil-Military and Commonwealth Relations, Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1964.

¹³⁹ Michael Bassett and Michael King, Tomorrow Comes the Song - A Life of Peter Fraser, Auckland: Penguin Books, 2000, p.16.

¹⁴⁰ Murphy, Charters, p.11.

distance between Wellington and Egypt and the need to operate within the British command structure, Freyberg was free from control by Army Headquarters in Wellington. Barrowclough was to report to New Zealand Army Headquarters but in exceptional circumstances could report directly to Fraser. Puttick had considered that this 'went too far' and was 'likely to lead to friction and a more or less complete divorcement of the 3rd Div. from NZ Home Forces.'¹⁴¹ That was precisely what Barrowclough intended. In practice, he reported regularly to Fraser and other ministers.¹⁴²

Occasionally a conflict arose between operational secrecy and the need to keep his political masters and Army Headquarters informed. For example, in September 1943 Barrowclough was told by American commanders of the intended use of 8 Brigade to take the Treasury islands. He commented to Army Headquarters:

I need hardly emphasise the need for the utmost secrecy in regard to this phase of the operation and I do not think the plan should be communicated to anyone outside Army HQ. I have no authority to report it to War Cabinet. Indeed, I have no authority to report it to Army HQ and I have not asked for it, but I feel that Army HQ should know how 8 Brigade is likely to be employed as otherwise it cannot foresee possible requirements. I would therefore particularly ask that no reference to the Treasury Islands operation be passed on beyond Army HQ. I see no reason, however, why the information contained in the rest of this letter should not be conveyed to the War Cabinet.¹⁴³

Freyberg's Charter was issued during the 'Phoney War', before his problems with British senior commanders appeared and was of a general nature largely because in January 1940 it was difficult to envisage the Division's precise role. Freyberg's problems had appeared by the time Barrowclough's Charter was issued on 5 November 1942 and it was then also clear that the Allies were still largely on the defensive in the

¹⁴¹ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, Puttick to Jones, 1 November 1942. It is a rather telling comment that Puttick considered 3NZ Division as part of 'NZ Home Forces'.

¹⁴² For example, Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/15, Memo Barrowclough to Fraser, 6 October 1943, on the future use of the Division; Memo Barrowclough to Fraser, 30 June 1944, on leave for 3NZ Division members and the future of the Division; Memo Barrowclough to Fraser, 23 August 1944, reporting on his return to New Zealand and the opening of Divisional HQ in Auckland.

¹⁴³ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/15/1 - pt.4, Operation Kiwi, Barrowclough to Army HQ, 20 September 1943.

Pacific. Barrowclough's Charter therefore recorded that his immediate role was the defence of New Caledonia. He could not use his force in any other role or theatre except in 'a grave emergency', and he was enjoined in such circumstances to, if possible, refer the matter to Wellington. Similar restrictions had not been placed on Freyberg. Barrowclough had observed Freyberg's difficulties with the British and consequently the restrictions he placed in his own charter reflected them. In particular, he was required to advise Wellington if he believed the proposed use of New Zealand troops would 'unjustifiably imperil his command', whereas Freyberg had simply been given the power to contact the Government in cases of 'grave emergency or in special circumstances'. Unlike Freyberg, he was required to provide Fraser with a certificate that his troops were sufficiently trained and equipped prior to their being involved in combat operations.¹⁴⁴

Barrowclough's Charter was more specific than Freyberg's in other ways. It recorded that he had been appointed to command the force in the Pacific due to leave New Zealand. It directed him to proceed to New Caledonia and noted that there he would come under the operational command of the American commander there. He was to act in accordance with the operational instructions of the commander under whom he was placed, who could be American or British, naval or military.

Barrowclough was given the power to detach units and place them directly under an American commander. Those troops would be 'subject to the orders and directions of the United States Officer under whose command they be placed in all respects as if that officer were a New Zealand officer serving under your command'. Freyberg was not given specific power to detach units, but he sometimes reluctantly allowed it. It was not envisaged that Barrowclough's under-strength two-brigade Division would be broken apart by an American commander except in extreme emergency, but he was given the specific instruction to 'at all times endeavour to keep to a minimum detachments from your force'. If an American commander sought to break up the Division, Barrowclough could point to that instruction.

¹⁴⁴ Archives NZ WAI, 1, AD12, 28/15 Vol. IV, GOC NZEF IP to Army HQ, 31 July 1943, 'I am of the opinion that 3Division is equipped and trained for the proposed operations'.

There is another significant difference between the two charters. Freyberg demanded that after the Third Echelon was despatched no officers above the rank of Captain would be sent to 2NZ Division without his consent. Barrowclough had no similar assurance. Control of the officers Barrowclough received rested with Army Headquarters.

Unlike Freyberg's Charter, Barrowclough's concluded with a general statement of purpose and recorded the New Zealand Government's wish that Barrowclough's force be used in 'the closest possible collaboration' with the forces of the United Nations. He was to use his 'utmost endeavours' to carry out the instructions of the person under whose operational command he had been placed.

The charters were not formally recognised by other Allied governments, but there was an informal recognition by British and American commanders that the New Zealand forces were national contingents and that Wellington could potentially withhold them. Similar charters were not issued to RNZAF or RNZN Commanders in the Pacific.

Barrowclough was not profligate with the lives of his men and he was acutely aware of the need to minimise casualties.¹⁴⁵ A commander who is too careful of the lives of his men can stymie operations, but during the Crusader battle for Point 175, Barrowclough showed that he was prepared to commit his troops and incur casualties in furtherance of clear operational objectives.¹⁴⁶ Fortunately, he did not have to make such hard decisions in the Pacific.

Barrowclough's direct role in the actions involving 3NZ Division was circumscribed by the nature of his command¹⁴⁷ and the conditions in which combat occurred. For

¹⁴⁵ Freyberg also was casualty sensitive. Raymond Callaghan comments that 2NZ Division's losses in the Mediterranean 'had been heavy and New Zealand's manpower reserves were slender'. Freyberg dealt directly with his Government and was left in no doubt about its concern over further heavy casualties. The result as Brooke put it, was that he conducted operations 'with a casualty conscious mind' relying on massive air and artillery support 'without risking too much infantry', Callaghan, p.174.

¹⁴⁶ W.E. Murphy, Point 175 – The Battle of Sunday of the Dead, Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1954.

¹⁴⁷ Barrowclough recognised that the American wish for his troops to complete the occupation of Vella Lavella, prepare for Goodtime, and maintain administrative functions entailed the splitting of his force between Guadalcanal, Vella Lavella and the Treasury Islands. He commented 'I could see at once the burden this would place on my administrative machinery and the difficulty, almost amounting to impossibility of exercising command over so dispersed a force with the staff and signals at my disposal'.

instance, the communication difficulties on Vella Lavella were frustrating. Barrowclough had a conference with Brigadier Potter on 19 September 1943 and 'settled tentatively on the plan of campaign designed to eliminate Japanese resistance in the northern part of the Island'.¹⁴⁸ After that, all he received were episodic reports of the combat. He recorded relief at receiving additional signal equipment and personnel on 25 September, as 'At the present time communications are almost non-existent except by the slowest of means and I feel very much out of touch with my command.'¹⁴⁹ Again on 28 September he commented 'the operation appeared to be progressing well but the country was so rough and so densely wooded that communications were extremely bad and the situation was necessarily obscured.' The following day he stated 'reports of 14 Bde actions were much delayed and very infrequent'. Barrowclough was aware on 10 October of 'two platoons which had been cut off for some time and of whose whereabouts we were still ignorant'. It was not until 3 October that he received word of their rescue. Barrowclough was very involved in the administration of the Division, meeting Senior American and other commanders and resolving problems whilst the fighting on Vella Lavella was taking place.¹⁵⁰ The nature of the fighting, which involved combat teams and action at platoon or even section level, meant that he was far removed from it.¹⁵¹

During the planning of Operation Goodtime American commanders seem to have given little consideration to keeping Barrowclough informed of their plans for his Division, such as its split into two brigade groups. On 10 September 1943 Barrowclough pressed Admiral Wilkinson to deploy 8 Brigade alongside 14 Brigade, but was told that there were plans for 8 Brigade occupying an island base in a defensive role.¹⁵² 8 Brigade was shipped to Guadalcanal in a series of echelons. Barrowclough then shuttled back and forth between Guadalcanal and Vella Lavella and his two brigades.

However, Barrowclough decided to carry on. Archives NZ EA28, 28/15/4 Report on Ops 3 Division, Barrowclough to Fraser, 31 December 1943.

¹⁴⁸ War Diary GOC 3NZ Division, 19 September 1943, p.21.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 25 September 1943, p.23.

¹⁵⁰ These ranged from constructing roads, moving Divisional HQ to a new location, improving sanitation and anti-malarial methods and general administration. War Diary GOC 3NZ Division, 18-26 September 1943.

¹⁵¹ On 28 September 1943 Barrowclough visited Brigadier Potter at Matu Soroto Cove and received his report on progress. Ibid., 28 September 1943.

¹⁵² Ibid., 10 September 1943, p.17

On 11 October 1943 he again called on Admiral Wilkinson

and spent the whole morning with him and his operation of 8 Bde. The plans were still incomplete and I felt some anxiety about the operation but not sufficient to justify my objecting to undertaking it. I wrote to Gen. Puttick expressing my views on the situation as I then envisaged it. In the afternoon I had a further conference with Brigadier Row and other officers.¹⁵³

Barrowclough's concerns were twofold - the fact that the landings would be done in waves with only a small force landing initially, and fear of a Japanese counter-invasion from the Shortland Islands. Of particular concern was the inadequacy of the force tasked with establishing a radar station at Soanotalu on the northern side of Mono Island. It was too close to a Japanese counterstrike for Barrowclough's liking and he told Row this, urging him to take it up with FMAC and CTF 31.¹⁵⁴ This indicates that he was being marginalised and that the practical level of Allied liaison was at the operational level of Brigadier Row. The sequel to Barrowclough's concern was that on 21 October he

Received letter from Brigadier Row explaining that FMAC and Admiral Wilkinson could not agree to my proposals for landing a Battalion on the North Coast of Mono island. They accepted my arguments but said that the proposals were precluded by the lack of shipping. I feel, however, that this is not a real obstacle and I am convinced that a Battalion could and should be landed at Soanotalu. The immediate responsibility for this operation, however, rests with FMAC and not with me. I can scarcely, with reason, refuse to carry out the operation, in the way they have laid down and I must hope that they will be able to give adequate naval support in the event of a serious attempt to counter-attack the Island.¹⁵⁵

In the event, an inadequate force was landed at Soanotalu and came under heavy Japanese pressure.

During the operations on the Treasury Islands, Barrowclough found himself relegated to

¹⁵³ War Diary GOC 3NZ Division, p.26.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, p.27.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 21 October 1943, p.28.

the role of a concerned spectator on Vella Lavella. He recorded that

we made elaborate arrangements for intercepting any news concerning their operation and we have furnished 8 Bde with a wireless link between them and ourselves to enable them to keep us posted as developments occur. Naturally, we were anxious regarding their mission,¹⁵⁶ particularly as there was little we could do from here to help them.¹⁵⁷

American air crew informed him that the preliminary naval bombardment had been 'very effective', but that the area was obscured by smoke. Barrowclough received a signal from Row late in the day advising that a lodgement had been made and casualties were light. Further reports arrived from different sources, including one from Soanotalu. Barrowclough still had concerns about the second echelon of NZ troops to the Treasury Islands, and in particular its vulnerability to air attack.¹⁵⁸ Fortunately, it proceeded unmolested. Barrowclough arrived at Blanche Harbour by PT Boat on 2 November to confer with Row. He was still concerned about the vulnerability of Soanotalu and visited it with Row 'just as a rather fierce battle was reaching its conclusion'. Barrowclough then visited Malsi and returned to Blanche Harbour.¹⁵⁹ He took the time to visit his soldiers on Mono and Stirling, and must have considered matters stabilised because he left Row's HQ on 4 November.

Although Potter was in charge of the 'Commando Raid' on the Green Islands, Barrowclough provided him with reasonably detailed information on the objectives of the mission and the resources available. He instructed Potter to issue Lt Col. Cornwall with all the necessary orders to carry out the mission. Barrowclough recognised that the tactical aspects were better left to his subordinates¹⁶⁰.

Operation Squarepeg offered Barrowclough the opportunity of being a fighting commander once more and he took it. Planning was complicated by American indecisiveness as to whether to invade the Green Islands or Boang Island, but he

¹⁵⁶ An apprehension undoubtedly heightened by the receipt of a message from Sgt. Cowan's wireless operator erroneously reporting that the Japanese forces had been reinforced. The radio operator omitted the word "not", Conversation with W.A. Cowan, 2003, see also Headquarters, pp. 54-55.

¹⁵⁷ War Diary GOC 3NZ Div., 27 October 1943, p.29. Barrowclough did, however, make 30 Battalion available to Row 'at call'. Row Report.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 31 October 1943, p.30.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 2 November 1943, p.31.

¹⁶⁰ Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15/4 Operations 3 Division Barrowclough to Potter, 24 January 1944.

undertook further planning between 31 December 1943 and 11 February 1944.¹⁶¹ The taking of the Green Islands involved not only 14 Brigade but Divisional HQ and support units, with Barrowclough as Land Force Commander. As Crawford observes, 'the Green Island operation was unique in that the New Zealand divisional staff had the principal role in carrying out the planning for the operation, whereas the brigade staffs had done most of the work for the earlier 3 Division operations'.¹⁶² Unfortunately for Barrowclough there was little opportunity for him to display his command skills in combat. Apart from aerial attacks, the landing was unopposed and Japanese were encountered in relatively small numbers. Thereafter Barrowclough lapsed back into administration¹⁶³ and his forces into a garrison role as American forces created an airstrip, PT base and radar facilities. The Americans expressed their appreciation of how well Squarepeg had gone¹⁶⁴ and Barrowclough had the satisfaction of knowing that he had been involved in the planning and command of a successful amphibious operation.

Barrowclough was undoubtedly one of New Zealand's most gifted soldiers at an operational level. He gained seasoning in the Desert War as a brigadier and demonstrated his skills as an administrator and trainer of the troops in the South Pacific. Because of the short duration of 3NZ Division's involvement in combat operations and the nature of those operations, he had little opportunity to show his skills as a divisional combat commander. Nonetheless, the transformation of the soldiers of 3NZ Division from an ill-equipped, ill-trained group into a fighting unit capable of complex operations is testament to his skills and leadership. He exhibited skills as a soldier diplomat, being singularly successful in working with the Americans, gaining their trust and support. This was essential because Barrowclough, unlike Freyberg, operated in an environment of American dominance. The success of 3NZ Division in the South Pacific owed much to Barrowclough's leadership. Yet Barrowclough's accomplishments are largely forgotten and his name unknown. He deserves a better fate.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., pp.38-47.

¹⁶² Crawford, 'Campaign', p.155.

¹⁶³ Barrowclough assumed command of the Green Islands on 4 March 1944 from Rear Admiral Wilkinson. Wilkinson Report p.11.

¹⁶⁴ Archives NZ, EA1, 87/19/7, DCGS to Sec. War Cabinet, 9 May 1944, Copy Memo COMSOPAC to Commander in Chief US Fleet.

CHAPTER 4: COMBAT OPERATIONS

The soldiers of 3NZ Division were committed to many combat roles, ranging from ‘special operations’¹ (such as coast-watching, intelligence-gathering, and leading local people in military operations) through to coastal ‘brown-water’ operations, a ‘commando raid’, full-scale amphibious operations and intense jungle warfare. These operations were often complex, were carried out in an unforgiving environment and had not been contemplated before the war. The diversity of combat operations and its adaptability are hallmarks of 3NZ Division.

This chapter addresses the Division’s three significant combat operations, on Vella Lavella, the Treasury Islands (Operation Goodtime) and the Green Islands (Operation Squarepeg). It also examines the special operations in which elements of the Division were involved, often as precursors to the main actions. The miniscule pre-war New Zealand Army was centred around a cadre of Permanent Force officers, most of whom had staff training. Irregular warfare was looked at askance,² yet the forces deployed into the South Pacific showed a bent towards it. Soldiers from 2NZ Division in the Mediterranean also carried out special operations, as detachments to irregular units such as the Long Range Desert Group.³ However, in the Pacific the soldiers conducting special operations remained members of 3NZ Division⁴ and later rejoined their units.

One of Wellington’s principal pre-war anxieties was that the Japanese would strike into areas vital to New Zealand from bases in the mandated islands. Wellington and

¹ ‘Operations conducted by specially organised, trained and equipped military and paramilitary forces to achieve military, political, economic or informational objectives by unconventional military means in hostile, denied or politically sensitive areas’. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Dictionary of Military Terms, London: Greenhill Books, 1999, pp.351-2.

² In the pre WWII British Army, which was the template for the New Zealand Army, there was opposition to the use of special forces. For example, Orde Wingate developed Special Night Squads in Palestine in 1938 to suppress Arab insurgents. Although very successful these were disbanded because of hostility from the British military establishment. David Rooney, Wingate and the Chindits, London: Cass & Co., 1994, pp.34-47.

³ Brendan O’Carroll, The Kiwi Scorpions – The Story of the New Zealanders in the Long Range Desert Group, Honiton: Token Publishing Limited, 2000, pp.2-5.

⁴ Those seconded to Fiji Military Forces were either directly from 3NZ Division or were sent from New Zealand as 2NZEFP. R.A. Howlett, The History of the Fiji Military Forces 1939-1945, Suva: Government Printer, 1948, pp.166-173.

Canberra had attempted to pre-empt this by establishing aerial patrols,⁵ but aircraft were limited in range, ability to linger over a target area, weather conditions, and serviceability,⁶ and a Japanese force might sail unobserved through such patrol lines.

New Zealand therefore deployed coast-watchers to report on enemy movements. Personnel skilled in wireless telegraphy were scarce, so Post and Telegraph workers were employed, though as civilians they were likely to be shot as spies if captured⁷. To lend them some legitimacy and provide company, 'soldier companions', volunteers selected from the Reserve Battalion of 8 Brigade, accompanied them. The men were unarmed in the belief that this would enhance their chances of survival if captured.

On 19 July 1941 22 soldiers and 15 wireless operators sailed from Suva to the Gilbert, Ellice and Ocean Groups. They had no hope of rescue in the event of Japanese invasion and were placed on small islands where there was nowhere to hide⁸. When the Japanese struck in December, coast-watchers on Little Makin, Pikate and Avaiani in the Gilberts were captured. As the Japanese thrust into the southern Gilberts in September 1942, they captured still more.⁹ The coast-watchers' fate varied. Some were sent to Japan as slave labour, but 17 were grouped on Tarawa, treated brutally and executed on 15 October, the first New Zealanders killed by the enemy in the South Pacific in World War II. News of their fate occasioned outrage after Tarawa was retaken in November 1943.¹⁰

Among New Zealand's strategic nightmares was a Japanese seizure of Fiji. Consequently from 1940-42 military personnel flowed there from New Zealand and

⁵ Archives NZ, EA 86/27/10 Pacific Defence Conference 1939, Report 25 April 1939.

⁶ After Pearl Harbour there was a shortage of aircraft which precluded reconnaissance patrols in the forward area. D.O.W. Hall, 'Coastwatchers' in *Episodes & Studies*, Vol. 2, Wellington: War Histories Branch Internal Affairs, 1950.

⁷ On 19 April 1942, after the first group of coastwatchers had been captured in the Gilbert Islands it was decided to retrospectively grant the civilian operators New Zealand Army rank. However, the decision was kept secret in order not to prejudice those already captured! Archives NZ, WAI, DA401.364/1, Narrative of the Coastwatching Service, p.18.

⁸ The coastwatchers deployed to the South Pacific were a sacrificial force designed to act as a tripwire to warn of Japanese advances. Peter Fraser at a meeting to discuss evacuating the coastwatchers affirmed that they had to remain at their post until 'a Japanese places his hand on their shoulder'. Archives NZ, NI 030/38/17. Report on visit of Prime Minister to Fiji and Tonga, 31 December 1941. See John Tonkin-Covell, 'The Collectors: Naval, Army and Air Intelligence in the New Zealand Armed Forces during the Second World War', PhD thesis in History, University of Waikato, 2000, pp.260-285.

⁹ W. Wynne Mason, *Prisoners of War*, Wellington: War History Branch, 1954, pp.160-1.

¹⁰ Archives NZ, DAZ 121/1/16 App.3 D339/1/63, Statement by Peter Fraser, 20 October 1944.

eventually formed two brigade groups. However, a Fijian Defence Force (FDF) was also raised, with Brigadier Cunningham commanding it as well as New Zealand forces. There was considerable interaction between New Zealand and Fijian forces with officers and NCOs being supplied from the brigade groups and New Zealand.

With Fiji apparently in danger early in 1942, Brigadier Potter suggested raising guerrilla units to harass the Japanese and provide enclaves where Allied troops could reform¹¹. In May three commando units were formed from New Zealand and FDF personnel. One of these, Northern Independent Commando, was mounted on horseback and operated in the Western area of Viti Levu.¹² Some later Fijian units were described as ‘guerrillas’.¹³ Led predominantly by New Zealanders, these were employed by the Americans on Guadalcanal, New Georgia and Bougainville. They proved so adept that Halsey was reluctant to release control of ‘the South Sea Scouts’ and Fijian units so that 3NZ Division could expand to three brigades.

The major operations of 3NZ Division were characterised by eight elements. Firstly, American planners chose the timing, objectives and means. Secondly, they were an integral part of the plan to neutralise the Japanese strongpoint at Rabaul. Thirdly, they were totally reliant on American shipping and firepower. Fourthly, they were conducted at the level of reinforced brigade group or below. Fifthly, they risked significant casualties. Sixthly, the Division was operating at the extreme end of a long logistic chain. Seventhly, the land operations were conducted by inexperienced New Zealand soldiers, with the backing of American support units such as Seabees and AA units. Eighthly, they were successful.

Prior to World War II Rabaul was a significant port and administrative centre. It had an excellent harbour and potential for projection of air power from its airfields. It also occupied a key position between the Japanese-held Caroline Islands, the Dutch East Indies and the Philippines. The Japanese seized Rabaul on 23 January 1942,¹⁴ shipped

¹¹ Archives NZ, WA II, DAZ 121/9/3/3/5 Potter suggested this at a meeting between the NZ Army, the Fijian Civil Administration and Fijian Chiefs on 18 March 1942.

¹² Howlett, pp.31-32.

¹³ Howlett, pp.221-226.

¹⁴ The dangers of inadequate garrisons are shown by the Lark Force debacle. See Bruce Gamble, Darkest Hour – The True Story of Lark Force at Rabaul, St Paul MN: Zenith Press, 2006.

troops, aircraft and equipment in, created extra airfields and dug fortifications into the surrounding hillsides.¹⁵ They also recognised Rabaul's importance by siting air, naval and army headquarters there, making it the linchpin of Japanese defences in the South Pacific, protected by an arc of bases. Rabaul was a formidable military, naval and air centre:

the Rabaul Garrison could have defended itself with bloody efficiency had the Allies invaded. The Japanese numbered almost 98,000 men and the rugged country of the Gazelle Peninsula was well suited for defence. By the war's end, some 350 miles of tunnels and caves had been excavated. At peak strength, Rabaul had 367 anti-aircraft guns, 43 coast defence guns, 475 artillery guns and Howitzers and 1,762 machine guns. Of these, only 73 anti-aircraft guns were destroyed by air bombing and one coastal defence gun. Imamura's men were also well equipped with tanks, mines, bunkers and concrete pill boxes as well as rifles, grenades, bayonets and ample ammunition.¹⁶

Allied planners recognised Rabaul's importance. A series of operations code-named Operation Cartwheel were to occur over eight months, during which Japanese air power would be weakened. The culmination was to be Operation Towpath, an amphibious assault on Rabaul itself by 2nd Marine Division and 3NZ Division.¹⁷ Given its heavy fortifications, this assault would have been costly. However, the US Joint Strategic Survey Committee decided to neutralise Rabaul rather than assault it. MacArthur vociferously advocated the assault, but the Joint Chiefs of Staff favoured neutralisation. At the Quebec Conference in August it was decided Rabaul would be bypassed and MacArthur's forces would push up the coast of New Guinea with a view to invading the Philippines. This was MacArthur's prime ambition and he readily agreed.¹⁸

The Vella Lavella operation was part of the strategy of neutralising Rabaul. Vella Lavella is in the New Georgia Group. It is 12 miles by 26 miles, with a central ridge rising to 2-3,000 feet. The island is covered in thick jungle and has several bays, some

¹⁵ Peter Stone, Hostages to Fortune - The Fall of Rabaul, Yarram, Victoria: Oceans Enterprises, 1994.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p.221.

¹⁷ Gordon L. Rottman, Saipan and Tinian 1944, Oxford: Osprey Publishing Ltd, 2004, p.34.

¹⁸ Stanley L. Falk, 'Douglas MacArthur and the War Against Japan' in William M. Leary (ed.), We Shall Return – MacArthur's Commanders, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 2004, pp.11-12.

bounded by dangerous coral reefs. In short, the island favoured the defenders and its geography dictated how combat occurred.

After Guadalcanal the Americans viewed the New Georgia Group as their next target. The Japanese anticipated this and deployed troops on New Georgia, Kolombangara, Santa Isabel, Buka and Bougainville. The Americans suffered severe casualties on New Georgia.¹⁹ The Japanese hoped to defeat them on Kolombangara, but the Americans landed instead on Vella Lavella. Whereas they had previously seized airfields, this time they seized an island without airfields. These would be created by Seabees.²⁰

The main American force landed on the south of the island on 15 August 1943 and after fierce fighting the enemy seemed to be retreating northwards. The Americans decided to utilise New Zealand troops to eliminate the remaining defenders. Personnel from 14 Brigade, three sergeants, one from each battalion, and Lt D.G. Graham of Brigade HQ, accompanied South Seas Scouts on a stealthy reconnaissance of Vella Lavella.²¹ They linked up with an American battalion and scouted for them, shooting two Japanese on 3 September in the first land combat involving soldiers from 3NZ Division.²²

Superficially 14 Brigade's task seemed simple – destroy a beaten enemy and secure the island.²³ However, there were complications. Although some Japanese troops were reported 'short of food and in a weakened condition', it was feared that reinforcements were landing.²⁴ Moreover, the Japanese had shown how determinedly they could defend and might retreat into the thick jungle of the interior. Another complication was

¹⁹ Brian Altobello, Into the Shadows Furious – The Brutal Battle for New Georgia; Novato: Presido Press, 2000.

²⁰ John Miller, Jnr, Cartwheel: The Reduction of Rabaul, Washington, D.C.: Centre of Military History, US Army, 1990, pp.172-3.

²¹ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 155/1/20 Narrative 1 Commando Fiji Guerrillas.

²² Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 158/1/22 Copy of diary kept by Sgt H B Brereton whilst temporarily at 1 Fijian Commandos.

²³ Archives NZ EA 28, 28/15/4 Report on Ops 3 Division. Barrowclough's instructions were 'to eliminate all Japanese forces on the island so that we could proceed with the erection of Radars on the North East and North West Coasts...' The establishment of these radar sites was viewed as being of 'primary importance' because of their coverage of the enemy air bases on New Britain and Bougainville. The establishment of a PT boat base at Horanui was a secondary factor. It was thought that the Japanese were 'anxious to avoid battle' and they would withdraw resulting 'in a long and perhaps never ending chase'. Barrowclough to Fraser, 31 December 1943.

²⁴ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 121/1/1/8 3NZ Division. Intelligence Summary No 1. Entry 2 September 1943.

that the Japanese dominated the skies and Allied air cover would be episodic.²⁵ Moreover, 14 Brigade were totally dependent upon the Americans for sealift. The latter faced considerable calls on their shipping and the New Zealanders would be chronically short of the landing craft for the needed level of manoeuvre.

For the Americans Vella Lavella ended the gruelling New Georgia campaign.²⁶ By mid-1943 they faced an acute shortage of trained troops, as units needed time to recover. With strong Japanese forces still in the South Pacific, units were tied up in garrisons on Fiji, Tonga and Samoa. In all, SOPAC had only six divisions.²⁷ 3NZ Division was available and it was decided to utilise 14 Brigade on Vella Lavella, while 8 Brigade was earmarked for the Treasury Islands. This divided the Division, with a Main HQ on Vella Lavella and a Rear HQ on Guadalcanal. Barrowclough had command responsibility not only for Allied forces on Vella Lavella, but also for the administrative tail stretching from Guadalcanal to New Caledonia back to Auckland. The operational handling of combat units on Vella Lavella fell to Brigadier Leslie Potter.

Some 500-600 Japanese defenders²⁸ were believed left on the north of the Island,²⁹ monitored by a detachment of the 1st Commando Fijian Guerrillas, including a coast-watcher, a lieutenant from 14 Brigade and some local islanders.³⁰ One Allied advantage was that they could use sea transport around the coast of Vella Lavella, albeit at the price of being regularly bombed or strafed. Potter had 14 landing barges³¹ crewed by Americans and he decided to utilise this capability by transporting infantry, artillery and heavy supplies in leaps 'to feel forward with patrols and search the country

²⁵ The nearest Allied airfield was to the south of Munda and Allied aircraft were restricted to irregular daylight patrols. Third Division Histories Committee, The Gunners, Wellington: A.W. & A.H. Reed, 1948, p.74. 14 Brigade H.Q. was attacked on one occasion by 4 Japanese aircraft, Third Division Histories Committee, Headquarters; Wellington: AW & AH Reed, 1947, p.79.

²⁶ The campaign was noted for the considerable number of casualties suffering from 'combat fatigue' or 'war neuroses'. Miller, p. 187.

²⁷ Henry I Shaw, Jnr and Dougals T Kane, Isolation of Rabaul – History of US Marine Corps Operations in World War II, Vol. II: Washington: US Printing Office, 1963, pp.35-36.

²⁸ The Japanese seem to have been predominantly Naval Land Forces and a mixture of shipwrecked sailors and shot down aircrew.

²⁹ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 151/1/21, Appendix V.

³⁰ Archives, NZ, WAI, DAZ 503/1/VIII-IX.

³¹ In contemporary accounts the words 'landing barge' and 'landing craft' are used interchangeably. The vessels were landing craft, self propelled with Coxwain and often a crewman to operate the machine gun. The vessel had a lowerable landing ramp. The designation was LCVP – Landing Craft Vessel Personnel.

and secure a base from which the next bound forward could be made'. These bounds were governed by the openings in the reef so as to supply troops by boat. The initial bounds planned for the infantry were to Paraso Bay, Dovellie Cove and Tambama Bay. On reaching Tambama it was planned to move the guns from Paraso Bay to Tambama to cover the further advance of the infantry.³² Potter decided to split his forces into two Battalion Combat Teams to hit the Japanese from the east and the west, push them against the northern coast and annihilate them.³³

The mountainous terrain and dense jungle meant hauling artillery across land was impractical. Naval gunfire support was unavailable because the USN destroyers were fully committed elsewhere and would have been vulnerable to air attack in the limited sea-room around Vella Lavella. Nor does close air support seem to have been sufficiently developed in the South Pacific to be an option. If problems developed, Potter's troops would be on their own. The terrain also imposed difficulties in command and control. World War II wireless sets were unreliable in jungle conditions due to high humidity. Type 48 sets had to be abandoned due to their weight and antennae, but a Type 21 set was used satisfactorily.³⁴ There was also probably jamming by the Japanese. On 8 October patrols planned for the Marquana area were almost shelled by 12 Battery due to a breakdown in wireless communication. Fortunately, the barrage began before the infantry set out.

Jungle warfare tends to favour the defender³⁵ and the Japanese proved masters at fortification and camouflage, with excellent fire discipline. They placed riflemen on the flanks of the New Zealand soldiers to encourage them into the fire lanes of machine guns. Although driven out of their defences by the Americans, they had established

³² Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 158/1/21, Report No. 1 Combat Team, 15 October 1943.

³³ Barrowclough conceded that this division of force potentially enabled the Japanese to concentrate against one of the pincers and defeat it in detail. However, it was felt that the artillery component was capable of dealing with the threat. If the advance had been up one coast only, Barrowclough felt that the Japanese would simply have withdrawn steadily. Archives NZ, EA 28, 28/15/4 Barrowclough to Fraser, 31 December 1943, p.3.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Archives NZ EA 28, 28/15/4 '...we were the attackers and necessarily on the move, the enemy could always see and open fire on us long before we could see and open fire on them'. Barrowclough to Fraser, 31 December 1943.

supply dumps and further supplies were parachuted to them.³⁶ Conversely Potter had coast-watchers and friendly locals, who provided pilots for the landing craft.³⁷

The Combat Teams were combined-arms units. The 37 Battalion Combat Team consisted of 37 Battalion, A Troop, 207th Light AA Battery, A Troop 53rd Anti-Tank Battery, a detachment of 20th Field Company, a detachment of 16th M T Company, HQ Company 22nd Field Ambulance and a detachment of signallers.³⁸ The 35 Battalion Combat Team was similar, with an infantry battalion, artillery battery, engineer section and ASC Section and a field ambulance company.³⁹ These combat teams were effectively battlegroups.

Operations began on 21 September with reconnaissance parties in platoon strength taking Mundi Mundi and Paraso Bay unopposed. The 37 Combat Team then moved to take Boro. 35 Combat Team advanced in a series of bounds up the western coast. By 25 September advanced HQ 14 Brigade was set up at Mundi Mundi, with 35 Combat Team to the north at Matu Soreto Bay and 37 Combat Team at Boro. When 35 Combat Team reached Timbala, reports suggested that there were approximately 300 Japanese soldiers between there and Marquana Bay. 35 Combat Team's commander, Lt. Col. C.F. Seaward, ordered two platoons under Lt. J.W. Beaumont to go to Marquana to stop them from retreating to Warambari Bay. The patrol came under strong attack at Marquana on 27 September,⁴⁰ but formed a defensive perimeter. Beaumont's radio was destroyed,⁴¹ so the patrol's fate remained a mystery to Brigade HQ for five days.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Hall, p. 296.

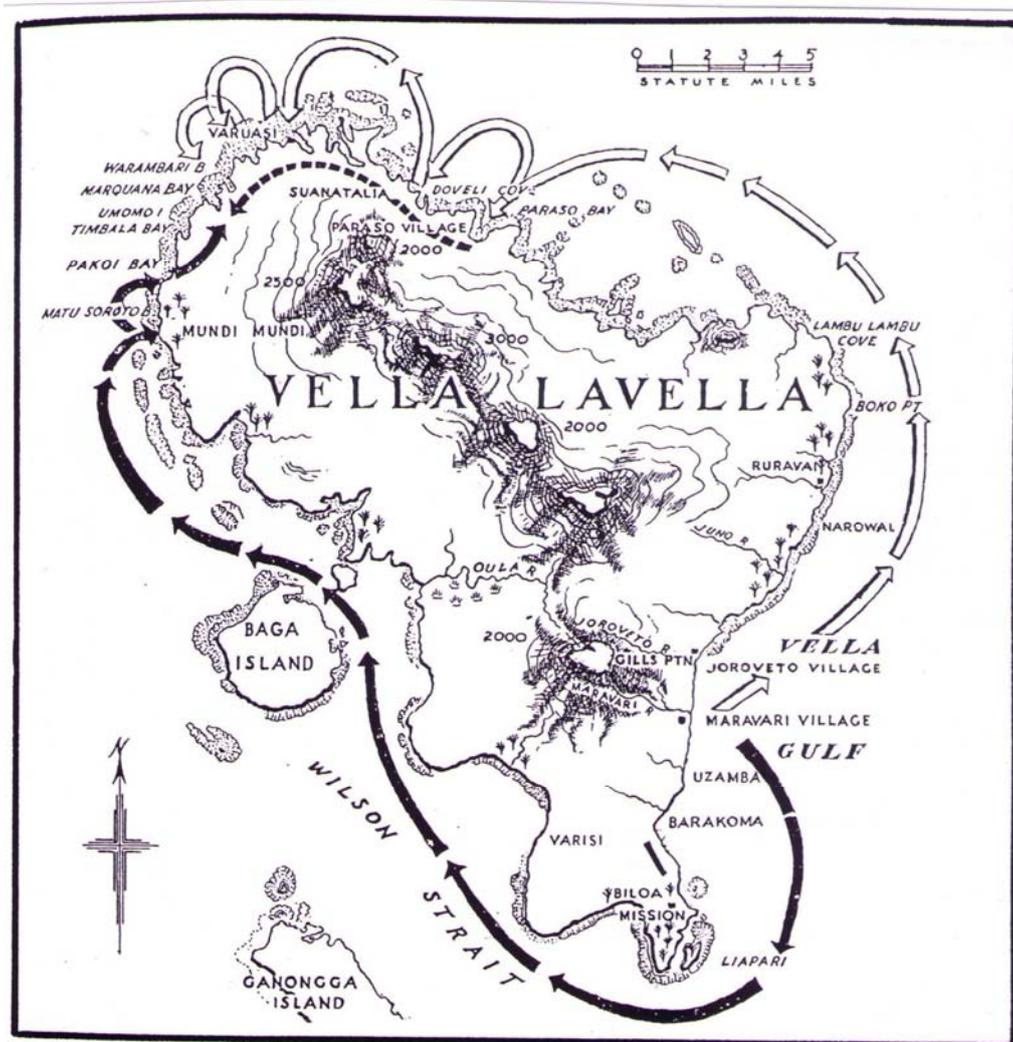
³⁸ Third Division Histories Committee, Pacific Saga, Wellington: AH and AW Reed 1947, pp. 69-70

³⁹ The Third Division Histories Committee, The 35th Battalion, Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1947, p.45.

⁴⁰ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 157/1/22, Appendix 2b.

⁴¹ Army Board, Guadalcanal to Nissan, Wellington: Army Board, 1945, pp.18-19.

VELLA LAVELLA, THE ARMY BOARD, GUADALCANAL TO NISSAN,
 WELLINGTON: ARMY BOARD, 1945, P.11.



White arrows show the movement of 35 Battalion Combat Team.

Black arrows show the movement of 37 Battalion Combat Team.

Meanwhile, three companies of 35 Combat Team had concentrated around Timbala Bay. On 28 September, 12 Field Battery began firing at Japanese positions with fire control undertaken by forward observers with the infantry and on a boat.⁴² Once the artillery barrage ceased, the infantry advanced, though rain made progress extremely difficult.⁴³ B Company to the north of Timbala Bay encountered heavy resistance,

⁴² Archives NZ WAI, 1, DAZ 126/1/13.

⁴³ Archives NZ WAI, 1, DAZ 121/1/1/8 Daily Intelligence Summary No 11, 30 September 1943.

called for reinforcements and dug in.⁴⁴ Potter ordered 35 Combat Team to cease large-scale attacks until 37 Combat Team located the Japanese flank. On 1 October 37 Combat Team established its artillery battery at Varuasi and both 35 Field Battery and 12 Field Battery were able to be mutually supporting. The Japanese had only 'knee mortars' and could not counter-battery, while their air attacks were largely ineffective because of the enveloping jungle, but efforts to push north-west were stymied by Japanese machine guns. One position was nicknamed 'Machine Gun Gully'.

The mystery of what had happened to Beaumont's patrol was resolved on 1 October when a forward observer on a boat off the northern coast received a signal from it. Fifty-one of the soldiers had reached the beach at Maquana and set up a defensive perimeter. The patrol had suffered 6 killed and 8 wounded, had lost most of its rations and had been weakened by hunger and dehydration. Problems did not end with re-establishing contact, as heavy fire prevented an attempt to pick up the patrol. On 2 October two barges sent to rescue the patrol grounded on the reef. An officer was killed, as were four soldiers attempting to bring a cable to the beach.⁴⁵ Two others were wounded. However, ten volunteers using a canoe and rubber boat managed to bring off the wounded after dark and by 2300 hours the Beaumont Patrol was safely aboard the barges.⁴⁶

The assumption that the Japanese were demoralised had proven mistaken and their numbers grossly under-estimated. However, the patrol maintained cohesion and the fact that it carried off its wounded indicates good discipline. Potter later commented that 'the action of this patrol in holding on to its position for that period (five days) was largely responsible for the success of the operation'. Yet it had been too weak to provide a blocking force, had been isolated for six days and had only been rescued by sheer luck and courage. The casualties involved constituted some of the heaviest in a 3NZ Division operation and the Japanese were not blocked, evacuating their forward positions and heading towards Warambari Bay.

⁴⁴ Archives NZ WAI, 1, DAZ 157/1/21.

⁴⁵ Recollections of Gordon Graham, 27 April 2007, Author's Collection. Gordon Graham was the sole survivor of the initial rescue group.

⁴⁶ Guadalcanal to Nissan, pp.18-19.

35 Combat Team continued its advance by sending out patrols 200-300 yards ahead of the main body. Once the Japanese were found, the infantry attempted to encircle them. If they came across a fortified position which they could not take, they would pull back to allow artillery to bombard it.⁴⁷ By 5 October Japanese resistance had melted away. On 8 October Maquana Bay was found abandoned and soldiers from 35 Combat Team and 37 Combat Team linked up on 9 October between Maquana and Warambari Bays. Patrols were sent inland to make sure that the Japanese had indeed left.⁴⁸

37 Combat Team had a comparatively easier time, but mechanical breakdowns meant there was never sufficient shipping and their LCM, the larger, more useful craft, was only occasionally available. A platoon landed uneventfully at Paraso Bay on 21 September, and linked up with local scouts organised by Lieutenant Henry Josselyn, a coast-watcher and District Officer in the British Solomon Islands administration. As the reef at Paraso Bay prevented artillery being landed, it was decided to push on to Dovelli. The company established a beach-head there on 22 September, being joined by HQ, medical, signal and infantry units the following day.

37 Combat Team established itself at Boro on 25 September. Lt. Josselyn and teams of Solomon Islanders indicated that the Japanese were moving towards Warambari Bay. On 2 October, 35 Field Battery reached Baruasi and was able to provide fire support. Two days later 37 Combat Team reached Susulautolo Bay. Thinking that the Japanese were retreating, Potter ordered a landing on 5 October at Warambari Bay and allocated four barges from 35 Combat Team to assist. The landing met stiff resistance until artillery fire was brought to bear.⁴⁹ On 6 October the Japanese area was again bombarded and B Company moved to clear the bay. A patrol commanded by Lieutenant D. Law came into contact with the enemy and suffered two killed and one wounded with four Japanese estimated killed. A patrol into the Japanese bivouac area developed into a fire-fight in which Lieutenant Nicholls was killed. His soldiers retrieved his body under fire, a testament to the bonding between troops and officers.

⁴⁷ Archives NZ WAI, 1, DAZ 157/1/22.

⁴⁸ Archives NZ, WAI, Series 1, DAZ 157/1/22

⁴⁹ Archives NZ, DAZ 158/1/21, War Diary, 37 Battalion, Entry 5 October 1943.

B Company reported that there were no Japanese between the perimeter and the head of Warambari Bay. On the night of 6-7 October the Japanese managed to evacuate their forces.⁵⁰ In the process they became involved in the naval Battle of Vella Lavella. One Japanese and one American destroyer were sunk but the Japanese evacuation was successful.⁵¹ Japanese casualties on Vella Lavella were estimated at 200-300. The New Zealanders suffered four officers and 28 other ranks killed, and one officer and 31 other ranks wounded.⁵²

The troops on Vella Lavella used 2 inch and 3 inch mortars, the latter proving the more useful. They also used the 2-man Vickers machine gun for perimeter defence. Bren Guns were particularly useful. Surprisingly, the Lee Enfield Rifle was little used because it was too heavy and the re-loading process attracted enemy attention. Officers carried rifles but found that they became too involved in re-loading rather than commanding troops. The best weapons on patrol were the Thompson Sub-machine Gun and grenades. The Boys Anti-Tank Rifle was apparently the worst because of its weight and bulkiness. For both Combat Teams artillery was critical to dislodging the Japanese, as small-arms fire proved ineffective against fortified positions. A total of 3,338 rounds were fired by 12 and 35 Batteries.⁵³

Intelligence played a limited role. It was hard to pinpoint the Japanese, while their numbers fluctuated as they were reinforced by barge and by shipwrecked naval personnel and shot-down aircrew. The coast-watchers and South Seas Scouts could only estimate their numbers and whereabouts. The withdrawal of the Scouts meant that the New Zealanders were reliant upon their own patrols and local islanders. The difficulties of the Beaumont Patrol arose partly from inadequate intelligence.

As one tree looked much the same as the next, it was difficult for artillery to plot targets or assess damage. Photo reconnaissance material was distributed,⁵⁴ but there were few accurate maps, and the thick jungle precluded easy movement of heavy artillery pieces.

⁵⁰ Estimated to be 589. Shaw and Kane, p.156.

⁵¹ Paul S. Dull *A Battle History of the Imperial Japanese Navy (1941-1945)*, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1978, pp.283-286.

⁵² Archives NZ WAI, 1, DAZ 155/1/21 Appendix.

⁵³ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 126/1/14, Appendix 4A.

⁵⁴ Archives NZ WAI, 1, DAZ 155/1/21.

The local transport network consisted of trails, on which motorised units became bogged. The jungle canopy made the fall of shot difficult to observe and set off artillery rounds above ground, so artillery had to be specially fused, while heat, humidity and rain affected the artillery pieces and their accuracy. Forward observers were located with infantry units or on native craft at sea, but this was dangerous because speech could draw Japanese fire. The Japanese largely controlled the skies. The nearest Allied air field was to the south of Munda, so Allied aircraft were restricted to irregular daylight patrols.⁵⁵



14 Brigade troops on Valla Lavella. Alexander Turnbull Library. WH-0237.

Troops on Vella Lavella wore the cotton, twill US-made green camouflage clothing and cloth caps. Steel helmets were found to be too heavy, and uncomfortable to wear in the jungle, while gas masks were discarded. Each soldier had two days' rations plus an emergency chocolate ration. Drinking water was at a premium and was frequently supplied with rations. Troops carried chlorinating tablets.⁵⁶ Logistical arrangements were very successful, with 16 MT Company maintaining five days of rations to the

⁵⁵ Third Division Histories Committee, *The Gunners*, Wellington: A.W. & A.H. Reed, p 194, p.74

⁵⁶ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/15, Volume 1, Pacific Operations, Report on Combat Operations.

front-line units despite the shortage of craft. Supplies were usually moved by barge to beach-heads and then dispensed by carrying parties.

Vella Lavella provided the first combat experience for 3NZ Division. Overall, the 14 Brigade soldiers functioned well; they adapted quickly and learned to overcome Japanese defences with artillery. They were victorious with relatively light casualties,⁵⁷ compared with the American Army experience on New Georgia. Vella Lavella also gave 14 Brigade expertise which it was able to use in Operation Squarepeg.

An unconventional aspect of the operation was the capture of a Japanese barge and its use to support 14 Brigade.⁵⁸ Because of their loss of merchant vessels, the Japanese began producing wooden craft to supply their garrisons.⁵⁹ On 27 September, a patrol of 37 Combat Team saw one entering Tambama Bay. The Japanese went ashore and the New Zealanders took over the barge, firing on the enemy and pursuing them into the jungle when they returned. The barge was renamed Confident,⁶⁰ a singularly inappropriate name given the difficulties starting and maintaining its engines.⁶¹ Nonetheless it proved useful for hauling equipment. Because of the mechanical difficulties which plagued the American landing craft, and the need to refuel, 37 Combat Team had only four barges available from 28 September to 3 October. This meant lengthy delays in moving it from Boro to Tambama Bay. On 5 October only two craft were available. The Confident, crewed by five New Zealanders,⁶² became the flagship of 37 Combat Team. Three wrecked Japanese barges were also put into service. Boro became so busy that Lt Stokes became harbour-master.⁶³ The willingness to press enemy equipment into service illustrates the adaptability of 3NZ Division's soldiers.

⁵⁷ Casualties did not finish with the Japanese withdrawal. Japanese planes bombed New Zealand positions and allied ships. Barrowclough noted that 'the whole operation costs us 47 killed and 36 wounded. A conservative estimate of enemy casualties was 200 killed'. Archives NZ, EA28, 28/15/4 Barrowclough to Fraser 31 December 1943.

⁵⁸ Gillespie, p.136.

⁵⁹ Samuel Eliot Morison, Breaking the Bismarcks Barrier, Boston: Little, Brown, 1950, pp.48-9.

⁶⁰ Archives NZ WAIL, 1, DAZ 158/1/22 War Diary Entry Vella Lavella, 17 October 1943.

⁶¹ The engines were diesel and required to be heated with blow lamps before they could be started. Gillespie, p.78.

⁶² Ibid., p.78

⁶³ Ibid., p.79.

General McClure, USMC 'believed that the Vella Lavella operation could have been shortened and the defenders wiped out'. He maintained 'had sufficient landing craft been available I could have cut off Jap forces on Vella with small local amphibious operations'.⁶⁴ That was precisely what Potter was attempting and lack of landing craft prevented his success. He did not stop the Japanese withdrawing by sea, but neither did the United States Navy.⁶⁵

3NZ Division personnel were also involved in a behind-the-lines mission from 30 September to 12 October 1943. American planners lacked accurate maps, so specialists were sent to the Japanese-held island of Choiseul to gather astronomical data. Sgt. G.G. McLeod from 29 Battalion led four New Zealand soldiers to protect four American specialists. They travelled by LST and seaplane to Choiseul, where they landed in local canoes. Peter Carey, a Solomon Islander, guided them, while friendly locals also warned the patrol of Japanese activity, provided crews for the canoes and supplied shelter and food.⁶⁶ The patrol reached Samasana and then returned to Nanano Island. The New Zealanders were flown back to Rendova for debriefing and on to Tulagi to rejoin 8 Brigade.⁶⁷

It is noteworthy that this patrol was commanded by a sergeant (as were the later Cowan Patrols on the Treasury Islands) and that it relied on stealth, being small and lightly armed. It was also hugely reliant on the local population. It is significant that the Americans entrusted four specialists to New Zealand protection.

The Division's second major military operation, Operation Goodtime, presented even more complex challenges than Vella Lavella and involved working with American planners and fighting alongside American land units. 8 Brigade was ordered to amphibiously assault a Japanese-held island, eliminate its defenders and establish radar

⁶⁴ John N. Rentz, Marines in the Central Solomons, Nashville: The Battery Press, 1989, pp.135-136.

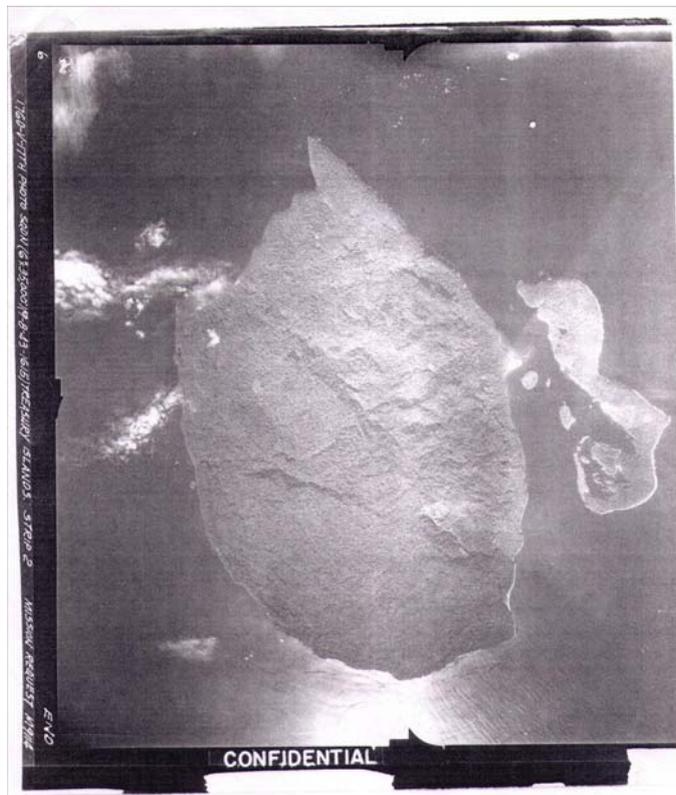
⁶⁵ Referring to the Japanese evacuation of Kolombangara, Paul Dull comments – 'Kolombangara was evacuated by barges to Bougainville, via Sumbi Point and Choiseul. Almost 10,000 men were rescued in this manner, with the US Navy unable to devise means to prevent it'. Dull, p.283.

⁶⁶ The patrol 'carried food, clothing and tobacco, gifts for the natives, who had been deprived of such commodities since the advent of the Japanese'. Local help was key in avoiding the 4-5,000 Japanese on Choiseul. Guadalcanal to Nissan, pp.27-28.

⁶⁷ Third Division Histories Committee, Stepping Stones to the Solomons, Wellington: AW & AH Reed, 1946, Chapter 6, pp.51-55.

stations whilst facing a possible large counterattack. Moreover, the lack of landing craft meant that only a limited number of troops could land in the first wave.

In many ways Goodtime epitomises New Zealand's land war in the South Pacific - limited numbers engaged, a sensitivity to casualties and a complete reliance on the Americans for sealift and naval support, supplies and even choice of objective. Goodtime was undertaken at brigade level because 3NZ Division was under strength and the operation was tailored to the capacities of 8 Brigade. It assisted, but was not vital to, American success in Operation Cherryblossom⁶⁸, the later invasion of Bougainville. New Zealand soldiers were used because it suited the Americans, who were short of combat troops. There was significant risk⁶⁹ from possible counterattack and from operating in an area where Japanese airpower had not been neutralised.



Mono Island aerial photograph. Archives NZ WAII, 1, Z151/1/22

⁶⁸ Cherryblossom was the code name for the Empress Augusta Bay area and Dipper referred to the Bougainville operation. Shaw and Kane, p.175.

⁶⁹ Barrowclough had real concerns about the possibility of a Japanese counterattack of 3,000 or 4,000 lightly armed infantry, the uncertainty of USN protection, the extent of air cover subsequent to the first day of the invasion and uncertainty of fighter control. He concluded 'We are bound to have a good deal of air opposition and I am afraid we must expect not inconsiderable casualties during the landing operations, and the few days following until the 3 Marine Division effect their landing on Bougainville...'. Archives NZ, Puttick Papers, Barrowclough to Puttick, 11 October 1943.

The Treasury Islands consist of two main islands - Mono and Stirling. Mono is 4 miles north to south and 6½ miles east to west, with three peaks up to 1,053 ft, thick forest and few suitable landing beaches. Stirling is to the south, separated by Blanche Harbour. It is 4 miles long and up to a mile wide and had the best potential for an airfield because of its flatness and thinner forest. It also had a basic road system. Blanche Harbour has a number of small islets, including Watson, Wilson and Savo.⁷⁰ Missionary influence was strong and the islands' population was pro-Allied.⁷¹ In September 1943 the Japanese had 213 troops manning a radio station and lookout, but the main threat lay with their possible reinforcement from the Shortland Islands,⁷² 18 miles to the north. 14 Brigade garrisoned Vella Lavella, 60 miles to the south-east, but there was little hope of reinforcement from there.

In the USMC Official History Operation Goodtime is lumped in with the marine landing on Choiseul as 'Diversionary Assaults' associated with the attack on Bougainville.⁷³ This accurately sums up the purpose of Goodtime, but does not lessen its importance, nor the benefits that flowed from it. The operation was to provide a possible PT Boat base, establish radar stations to cover Bougainville and provide early warning of enemy aerial activity, and most importantly to draw Japanese attention away from Empress Augusta Bay.

Admiral T.S. Wilkinson oversaw the operation. However, Rear Admiral George Fort and his staff were most closely involved in planning with the New Zealanders. Brigadier Row was designated Landing Force Commander and 3NZ Division would supply most of the troops. The whole operation was American controlled though their troops were support rather than fighting personnel.

Brigadier Row first learned of the projected seizure of the Treasury Islands from Barrowclough on 14 September. He was told that 8 Brigade would come under the command of First Marine Amphibious Corps (IMAC) and that the invasion date was 1

⁷⁰ Not to be confused with the island off Guadalcanal.

⁷¹ To the extent of sheltering, downed Allied airmen – Jesse Scott correspondence – Author's Collection.

⁷² Gordon L. Rottman, World War II Pacific Island Guide: A Geo-Military Study, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2002, pp.130-132.

⁷³ Shaw and Kane, p.88.

November.⁷⁴ Row met with the Commander of 1MAC, Major General Charles D. Barrett, on 28 September and learned that the plan was a simultaneous assault on Empress Augusta Bay and the Treasury Islands. This was later amended so that 8 Brigade would assault the Treasury Islands on D-6 and still later D-5.⁷⁵ On 29 September Row received instructions which set out the 'tentative task of the Brigade' as the seizure of the islands, and the establishment of long-range radars and a landing-craft staging-point. The forces involved would be 8 Brigade Group and various US naval units.⁷⁶ Tentatively, 8 APDs, 2 LSTs and 8 LCIs were allocated for the first echelon with 2 LCTs and 4 LCIs for each succeeding echelon.⁷⁷

The planners of Goodtime were competing for resources with Cherryblossom, which was to be a mere four days later, not enough time to re-deploy shipping and other assets. Limited numbers of landing craft in particular had a considerable influence on their planning, as did the need to deploy a Combat Air Patrol over the shipping and beach-heads. The fighter aircraft would have limited time over the area and would have to be rotated, so shipping would need to be unloaded quickly. The memory of the debacle at Guadalcanal, where Japanese naval and air threats meant the transport ships left unexpectedly, leaving the US Marines unsupplied, was relatively fresh.

Brigadier Row and Admiral Fort were given only basic information and began planning in general terms. The decision as to where to land was facilitated by an earlier reconnaissance from the USS Greenling and excellent low-level reconnaissance photos.⁷⁸ They decided to make the main landing on Mono, which had beaches suitable for LSTs. Stirling would be captured simultaneously and New Zealand artillery established there in case the Japanese resistance proved too effective, or a counter-attack eventuated. A major consideration was the timing of the establishment of the northward-facing long-range radars. On 18 October new arrangements were made to the '8 Brigade Plan to permit of the early placement of long range and surface warning sets'. To establish these radars an APD was allocated to transport 'an infantry rifle

⁷⁴ Archives NZ, WAI 1 DAZ151/1/23, Report on Operations, 23 November 1943. (Hereinafter 'The Row Report').

⁷⁵ D-Day minus Five, or five days prior to the invasion of Bougainville. Ibid.

⁷⁶ Archives NZ, WAI, 1 DAZ 151/1/23 Appendix B to 8 NZ Brigade GPCO No 1, Order of Battle.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ The Row Report, p.4; Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15/1 Operation Kiwi Report on Occupation of Treasury Islands G.H. Fort, 10 November 1943, p.1.

company, a section of MG's, a section of CB's, and 60 radar personnel' to Soanotalu at H-hour D minus 5. Brooke-White hoped that these radars would be operational a day after landing.⁷⁹

Row was constantly aware of the limited shipping available and friction arose over the space allocated for the radar units⁸⁰. He complained to Barrowclough that originally no priority had been given to a radar station. Now two radar units were considered - light and heavy – with the heavy radar in operation five days before the landing at Empress Augusta Bay. Row sought to have the whole of 30 Battalion protect the radar, but needed an LST and an APD for transport. This was refused and he was given an APD carrying one company, 1 MMG Section, 60 radar personnel and 20 Seabees. Row was aware that heavy equipment, including a bulldozer, had to be landed. It would take 12 hours to set the radar up and another 1½ to 2 days to get it functional. He concluded that if the Japanese attacked in overwhelming strength, the radar could be destroyed and the force could 'retire by the West Coast'. AA protection was 'unsatisfactory' and Row sought four 20 mm AA guns from the Seabees, but this was 'washed out' because the Seabees had no trained personnel. He indicated that he might be able to provide a battery of 37 mm AA Guns in the second echelon, commenting that 'The problem is one of shipping and the value placed on the radar. If it is of first importance then sufficient shipping should be provided to land radar, AA, seabees and a sufficient force to guard the installation.'⁸¹

Barrowclough had real concerns about the risks to 8 Brigade, principally because of the limited number of troops that could be landed in the first wave at Soanotalu, the beach most exposed to a Japanese counter-thrust. On 22 October Barrowclough asked Row why a full battalion could not be landed, emphasising 'the advisability of strengthening the small detachment as soon as you get an opportunity'. He went on 'I realise that I am much more concerned over your venture than I would be if I were at hand with the rest

⁷⁹ Archives NZ, WAI, Series 9, Brooke-White to Barrowclough, 18 October 1943.

⁸⁰ 'My initial plan did not provide for any landing besides those at Falamai and on Stirling Island'. Row Report, p.4. The advancement of landing date and the after thought of establishing radars on the northern coast of Mono must have ramped up Row's stress hugely.

⁸¹ Archives NZ, WAI 9 S14 Operations, Row to Barrowclough, 20 October 1943.

of the Division to come to your assistance. Many of my fears may prove groundless but you must forgive my not unnatural anxiety over this operation.’⁸²

For their first opposed amphibious landing⁸³ since Gallipoli⁸⁴, the New Zealanders were fortunate to be under the command of the masters in such operations, the US Marine Corps and the US Navy. Row moved his headquarters closer to Wilkinson’s, but he experienced problems during the planning due to the fact that the headquarters of the amphibious force for Task Force 31 and the headquarters MAC were located 20 miles away from 8 Brigade ‘and the roads were, to say the least of them, NOT in the nature of speedways’. In addition, there were no satisfactory telephone lines from Corps to Row’s headquarters. In his after-action report, Row recorded that ‘much time was lost. Information and decisions could NOT be obtained quickly just when they were most needed. ... It was NOT possible for me to move my own HQ for had I done so I would have been out of contact with my own units.’⁸⁵

Operation Goodtime was put together hurriedly and the start date was advanced, resulting in some friction. Row recorded that some American units under his command reported after 28 September but were unable to give him precise details of numbers of personnel and their equipment. Still other units did not report until later and one Seabee unit had to be brought from the Russell Islands to substitute for one that had not arrived at Guadalcanal in time. Row recorded that the American officers were helpful but often had ‘very sketchy orders’.⁸⁶ Another example of haste was the late arrival of Rear Admiral George Fort, who embarked from Auckland on 26 October. He was in charge of the naval aspects and his absence during planning must have caused problems. Initially an essential ingredient had been the unloading of an LST at Stirling until the US Navy declared this was impractical. Similarly, loading plans on the basis of

⁸² Archives NZ, WAI 9 S14 Operations Barrowclough to Row, 22 October 1943.

⁸³ The Royal New Zealand Navy, Army and Airforce had carried out 'combined operations' exercises in the period 1926-1930 using the Admiralty's CB967 Manual of Combined Operations. The success of an amphibious assault exercise in 1930 was ascribed to the 'mistaken interpretation of the DC Defence...'. Archives NZ, N1 16/3/1 Part 2, Narrative Comments by Brigadier Southern Command, 3-4 March 1930.

⁸⁴ This point is often made in the literature but the fact of the matter is that the New Zealand Army undertook only one amphibious assault with the British Army, the illfated Gallipoli operation whereas in World War Two it undertook two major amphibious operations in the Pacific. The real significance of Goodtime is that it was undertaken under non-British aegis.

⁸⁵ Archives NZ, WAI, 1 DAZ151/1/23, Report on Operations - Treasury Island - 30 November 1943.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

maximum capacity had to be amended when the US Navy Commander rejected them. Unlike 3NZ Division's previous amphibious exercises, Goodtime did not involve large attack transports, but rather 31 ships of varying size, function and capability, which meant devising more detailed plans that had to be finalised at least 10 days prior to the operation.

Each item had to be assessed carefully because of the acute shortage of space and combat loading⁸⁷ was absolutely critical. AA guns, bulldozers, tractors, radar and communication vehicles and, most importantly, vehicles for unloading the landing craft, had to be available immediately. As it was, the ships in the first echelon had to carry 7,500 men when they only had capacity for 3,795 men and 1,785 tons of cargo. Consequently one infantry battalion was reduced from 729 men to 600 men and only one battery of the Field Artillery Regiment could be transported.⁸⁸ The Tank Squadron was left behind.⁸⁹ Its usefulness, however, was doubtful, given the jungle and hills of Mono Island. In its move from New Caledonia to Guadalcanal the staff of 3NZ Division had gained valuable experience in working out loading tables for its equipment, supplies and personnel, but during Goodtime much of the gear had to be left behind, including tents and cots. Rentz states 'since only eight APD'S (Destroyer Transports), two LST's, three LCT's and eight LCI's were available for transportation of the first echelon of the Brigade (which numbered approximately 7,700 officers and men), it was determined that supplies and equipment would be cut to the barest minimum and that only about 50-60% of the troops could be taken in the first echelon.'⁹⁰ The Tactical Loading Plan set the pace, being completed (Movement Order No. 1, 16 October 1943), five days before the Operational Order was issued. This Movement Order also set out the Tactical Loading Plan for the second and third echelons.⁹¹

The fact that Goodtime involved not only New Zealand units but also the US Navy, US Marine Corps, US Army (including United States Army Air Force) and the RNZAF

⁸⁷ The weapons and equipment likely to be used in combat would be loaded onto the vessels last so that they could be easily off loaded first.

⁸⁸ Archives NZ, WA II, DAZ151/1/23, Notes on Planning - Combined Operations, 30 November 1943.

⁸⁹ Jeffrey Plowman and Malcolm Thomas, New Zealand Armour in the Pacific 1939-45, Christchurch: Kiwi Armour, 2001, p.41.

⁹⁰ Rentz, p.93.

⁹¹ Archives NZ, WAII, DAZ 151/1/23, Notes on Planning – Combined Operations, 30 November 1943.

complicated planning. All had different cultures, terminology, doctrines and experience, and their representatives had to work under considerable stress due to lack of time and shipping.

On Tarawa in November 1943 the Japanese inflicted 3,301 US Marine casualties, a carnage which appalled the American public.⁹² That operation also underlines the fact that a misunderstanding of a geographic feature (the effects of tides) could result in horrendous casualties. Yet things had come a long way since hydrography had been ignored in the amphibious training exercises in Fiji with the resultant loss of landing craft.⁹³ Tidal height and the slope of the beach determined when landing craft could be beached. Other factors considered were the ability of naval forces to provide support, shelter from unfavourable sea and weather, compatibility of the beaches to the size, draught, manoeuvrability and beaching characteristics of the assault ships and landing craft, offshore water depth and bottom configuration, the extent of mineable water (any depth less than 600 ft was considered mineable), conditions which might affect the enemy's ability to defeat mine clearance efforts; and facilities for unloading shipping.⁹⁴

The area around the Treasury Islands was not mined,⁹⁵ but the beachheads were adjacent to Blanche Channel, with coral reefs and restricted sea room, unsuitable for large ships. The destroyers USS Pringle and USS Philip were therefore to provide fire support. Additional fire was provided for the first time by LCI(L)s, LCI craft equipped with two 20 mm, three 40 mm and five .50 calibre machine guns. They 'required much larger crews and sacrificed most of their troop carrying function, but the LCI(L)'s (as they were designated) provided to be the answer to prayer for fire support of assault troops delivered close to shore'.⁹⁶ In addition, PT Boats were to set up a picket line from the Shortland Islands to Choiseul to screen the convoy⁹⁷ and prevent a counter-attack to Mono Island. A short beach close to Falamai was the only one suitable for

⁹² Derrick Wright, Tarawa 1943 - The Turning of the Tide: Oxford: Osprey Publishing Ltd, 2001, p.93.

⁹³ William H. Bartsch, 'Operation Dovetail: Bungled Guadalcanal Rehearsal, July 1942', in Journal of Military History, April 2002 pp.443-476.

⁹⁴ USF-6, US Navy Amphibious Guide - cited in Robert Debs Heinl, Victory at High Tide - The Inchon - Seoul Campaign, London: Leo Cooper, 1972.

⁹⁵ Minesweeping units were deployed to sweep for mines on D-5. Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 151/1/23 Annex Dog, Minesweeping plan, 18 October 1943.

⁹⁶ Morrison, p.295.

⁹⁷ Rentz, p.92.

beaching LSTs⁹⁸ and had areas close by where supply dumps could be established.⁹⁹ Hence the main thrust of the invasion would be made there.¹⁰⁰ Stirling was the only position on which field artillery and AA guns could be quickly sited, but LSTs could not beach there until engineering work was carried out.¹⁰¹ Likewise, when it was decided to place a radar station on the north of Mono, a suitable beach had to be located. A small beach capable of accommodating an LCT¹⁰² was discovered at Soanatalu, but it would be exposed to a counter-thrust from the Shortlands and would be in the path of Japanese retreating off the island.

Once the task of taking the Treasury Islands was established, the Intelligence Section of 8 Brigade HQ constructed a sand-table model of the islands.¹⁰³ Low-level reconnaissance flights obtained excellent photos of the proposed landing sites.¹⁰⁴ Intelligence gleaned from radio intercepts, code-breaking and other sources was available to American planners, but not necessarily to Barrowclough or Row. For them there was the nagging fear that the Japanese might have been reinforced. Row's latest information was dated 8 September and indicated that there were 130 Japanese on the island, 125 having landed on 6 September. It was therefore possible that the Japanese might have reinforced their garrison from the Shortlands or from units retreating from Vella Lavella or New Georgia. Barrowclough ordered that a reconnaissance patrol be sent to Mono, despite the risk that its members might be captured and disclose the invasion plans.¹⁰⁵ Rear Admiral Wilkinson vetoed the proposal, but a memo from John Brooke-White records that 'a CW was suggested by CTF-31 and vetoed by DSIO. GC 1MAC has ruled that the patrol will go in and detailed arrangements have now been made. The Patrol will signal back its findings from Vella Lavella on 23.10 so you will

⁹⁸ Landing Ship Tank – Large ocean going vessels, designed to disembark large quantities of vehicles equipment, supplies and material without the necessity of prepared dock facilities or the need for cranes necessary to unload cargo ships. Gordon L. Rottman, Landing Ship, Tank (LST) 1942-2002, Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2005, p.3. With their bow-opening doors and the ability to discharge cargo directly onto a beach and then extract themselves, LSTs were a regular feature of Allied amphibious operations.

⁹⁹ Rentz, p.94.

¹⁰⁰ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ151/1/23, Report on Treasury Islands, 30 November 1943.

¹⁰¹ Rentz, p.94.

¹⁰² Landing craft, Tank – large landing craft designed to land multiple tanks and allow a rapid build up of armour on the beachhead: It could be carried on the deck of LST's. Gordon Rottman, US World War II Amphibious Tactics – Army and Marine Corps, Pacific Theatre, Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2004, p.41.

¹⁰³ Archives NZ, WA II, Series 1, DAZ 151/1/22, Part 1.

¹⁰⁴ 'Aerial photographs were being taken daily', John Rentz, Bougainville and the Northern Solomons, Washington: HQ US Marine Corps, 1948, p.93.

¹⁰⁵ Archives NZ, WAI, Series 9, S.14, Operations Row to Barrowclough, 8 October 1943.

be able to get first hand information. Personnel of the Patrol will then be flown back here (Guadalcanal).'¹⁰⁶ General Vandegrift considered the patrol so important that he overruled his navy counterpart.

The patrol was led by Sgt. W. A. Cowan,¹⁰⁷ a New Zealand bushman who had taught bushcraft to coast-watchers on Guadalcanal. His colleagues consisted of Corporal Frank Nash of the United States Army Air Communications,¹⁰⁸ Frank Wickham, whose family had long been traders in the Solomons, and Sgt. Ilala. The latter two belonged to the Solomon Islands Defence Force (SIDF). They were given 24 hours to reconnoitre the island and to ascertain troop numbers after being transported to the area by PT Boat and canoe two days before the scheduled invasion. Luckily they established contact with friendly locals who hid them and provided intelligence on Japanese numbers and positions. The group also located downed American airmen hidden by the locals on Mono. Cowan was specifically ordered not to recover air crew but he ignored this. He was brought back to brief Barrowclough and Row on Guadalcanal, reporting that there were 225 Japanese on Mono and none on Stirling. He reported the Japanese had machine guns and two 40 mm AA guns, and the local population was pro-Allied. Cowan persuaded a reluctant Barrowclough that he should return to Mono to cut telephone wires linking the Japanese outpost at Laifa Point with their headquarters near the Saveke River, to mobilise the local population as scouts, guides and information gatherers,¹⁰⁹ and to report any last-minute Japanese reinforcements. He also wanted to warn the locals of the impending invasion¹¹⁰ and the Allied naval bombardment.

This patrol consisted of Cowan, Corporal W. Gilfillan, Private C. Rusden and Private J. Lempriere of 29 Battalion, and two members of the SIDF. It traveled from Guadalcanal by plane then PT Boat to Mono and landed by canoe.¹¹¹ On 27 October they cut the telephone wire linking Laifa Point. Cowan experienced great difficulties with radio communication. The set initially malfunctioned and then the message sent mistakenly

¹⁰⁶ Archives NZ, WAI 9, S14 Operations Lt. Col. J. Brooke-White – Barrowclough, undated.

¹⁰⁷ Of 8 Brigade Intelligence Section.

¹⁰⁸ Eric Feldt, The Coastwatchers, Hawthorn, Australia: Lloyd O'Neil Pty Ltd, 1975, pp.287-288. Nash had extensive behind-the-lines experience in the Solomons. The Row Report (p.3) refers to Nash as being of the Australian Naval Intelligence Service.

¹⁰⁹ Archives NZ, WAI, 1Z151/1/23, Recce to Mono Island (No. 2).

¹¹⁰ Conversations with W.A. Cowan, 2003. Sgt. Cowan knew the date when Operation Goodtime was due to begin.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

indicated that the Japanese had been reinforced, causing Barrowclough considerable anxiety.¹¹² Subsequently the members of the patrol linked up with 8 Brigade following its landings and scouted for it. Cowan again made effective use of the local population, sending out groups of 10-16 scouts, referred to as 'blokes', to gather information. They brought in a number of Japanese prisoners.

From aerial reconnaissance, rescued aviators, and the first Cowan patrol, planners knew that the Japanese on Mono numbered 225 and that their headquarters was west of the Saveke River. Very importantly, it was known that they had artillery on both sides of the Falamai Peninsula and that there were machine guns covering its beaches.¹¹³ Despite this, Row considered that 'provided that the enemy could be subdued by support fire during the approach of the landing craft, a landing at Falamai was also the best way of getting at the enemy quickly'. He was clearly counting on naval gunfire suppressing the Japanese defences. The invasion sites consisted of two beaches¹¹⁴ near Falamai, two¹¹⁵ on the north central area of Stirling and one near Soanatalu.¹¹⁶ These were small sandy beaches with a tree line close to the water.¹¹⁷

The USN made four APDs and LCIs available and from 14-17 October 8 Brigade practised loading and unloading, and embarkation and disembarkation.¹¹⁸ Working parties for the unloading were organised,¹¹⁹ as were Beachmasters. Each company was allocated space, but this was often filled with non-essential items such as bed rolls, spare boots and hot boxes, which could have been on follow-up shipping. Unloading this superfluous cargo may have resulted in casualties during air raids because of the additional time taken.¹²⁰

There were four phases to the loading and embarkation. One group of LSTs loaded up and embarked for the Treasury Islands on 23 October, staging through the Russell Islands and Rendova; a second group of LSTs loaded on 24 October and sailed in

¹¹² Cowan interviews. Third Division Histories Committee, Headquarters, p.55 gives a different account.

¹¹³ Row Report.

¹¹⁴ 29 and 36 Battalions respectively.

¹¹⁵ 34 Battalion.

¹¹⁶ Logan Force.

¹¹⁷ Row Report, p.5.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 154/1/24, Appendix 3.

company with LCMs on 25 October; a third group of LCIs embarked personnel and sailed on 26 October; and a fourth group loaded personnel on to APDs which sailed on 25 October. The ships were divided into three groups according to their speed and roles. Each had to sail at a carefully regulated speed to arrive at the same time. This worked relatively well and the force arrived together off the Treasury Islands in the early hours of 27 October, though H-Hour was delayed due to the APDs being 20 minutes late, possibly due to chart inaccuracies or 'adverse currents'.¹²¹

A Japanese plane detected the force shortly before the landing, but the enemy response was sluggish. The 8th Fleet Commander was uncertain where the blow would fall until the garrison on Mono reported enemy landings. He then ordered his forces to concentrate on the Solomons rather than New Guinea and to make air attacks on vessels off Mono. He also instructed the Japanese submarine RO-105 there, and began assembling a naval force¹²² to launch a night-time raid against the Allied ships. Despite radar, the Japanese Long Lance torpedo could have made such an attack force extremely potent. Fortunately the attack was cancelled when aerial reconnaissance early on 28 October reported no sign of Allied activity. The Japanese commander then refocused his forces on New Guinea until the landings on Bougainville on 1 November diverted Japanese air power there¹²³.

The American naval bombardment of Mono was largely ineffective. Most shells overshot the island, the gunfire from the Philip in particular being 'disappointing in accuracy, timing and quantity'.¹²⁴ The vegetation hid Japanese positions and Blanche Harbour was overcast with heavy rain, while a spotting plane experienced radio failure. Furthermore, the narrow waters of Blanche Harbour prevented the destroyers getting in close. They ceased fire four minutes before the first assault was due to land, but LCI(L)

¹²¹ Archives NZ, WAI, 1Z151/1/23, Report on the Treasury Islands.

¹²² The HIJMS Nagara was a light cruiser of about 5,000 tons armed with seven 5.5 inch guns and eight torpedo tubes in four twin mounts, and had a maximum speed of 36 knots. David C. Evans and Mark Peattie, Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy 1887-1941, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1997, p.176.

¹²³ Archives NZ, WAI, 1DA438.3/3, Japanese View, Monograph 34, South East Pacific, Area Operations Record, Part II, 17th Army Operations, Vol. I.

¹²⁴ Rentz, Bougainville, pp.96-97.

gunboats continued to fire. The Pringle then patrolled to the west of Blanche Harbour whilst the Philip patrolled to the south of Stirling.¹²⁵

H-Hour was 0626 hrs and the landing sequence was set as a first wave of APDs at 0626 and LCIs at 0656 followed by a second wave consisting of APDs at 0720, LCTs at 0735 and 0850, followed by the heavier LCMs at 0920.¹²⁶ The first transport group anchored in Blanche Harbour and began disgorging their assault troops down nets into the smaller landing craft. Prior training proved its value and the process was orderly. The landing craft then formed up and moved towards the designated beaches. To get to Falamai they had to travel two miles into Blanche Harbour.¹²⁷ As the first wave passed Stirling Island, fire from a machine-gun position not detected by the Cowan patrol hit the LCIs and 5 USN personnel and 8 New Zealand soldiers were wounded,¹²⁸ one officer mortally. The later waves landing on Stirling found it deserted, the Japanese probably having returned to Mono. In the run in to the beach the landing craft were also subjected to rifle, machine-gun, mortar and mountain-gun fire.

The LCI(L) gunboats proved manoeuvrable and packed a considerable punch.¹²⁹ As one rounded Watson Island it succeeded in knocking out a 40 mm twin-mount gun.¹³⁰ Conversely supporting fire from an Allied gunboat held up 36 Battalion.¹³¹ Nevertheless, Row commented that ‘the close support rendered by the LCI gun boats undoubtedly kept down casualties during the assault. These boats protected the left flank of the first wave, and in addition shot at opportunity targets. One of them proceeded past Falamai Peninsula and raked that area with fire just prior to the landing (of the) 29th Battalion.’¹³²

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ151/1/23, Report on Operations, 30 November 1943.

¹²⁷ Rentz, Bougainville, p.97.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

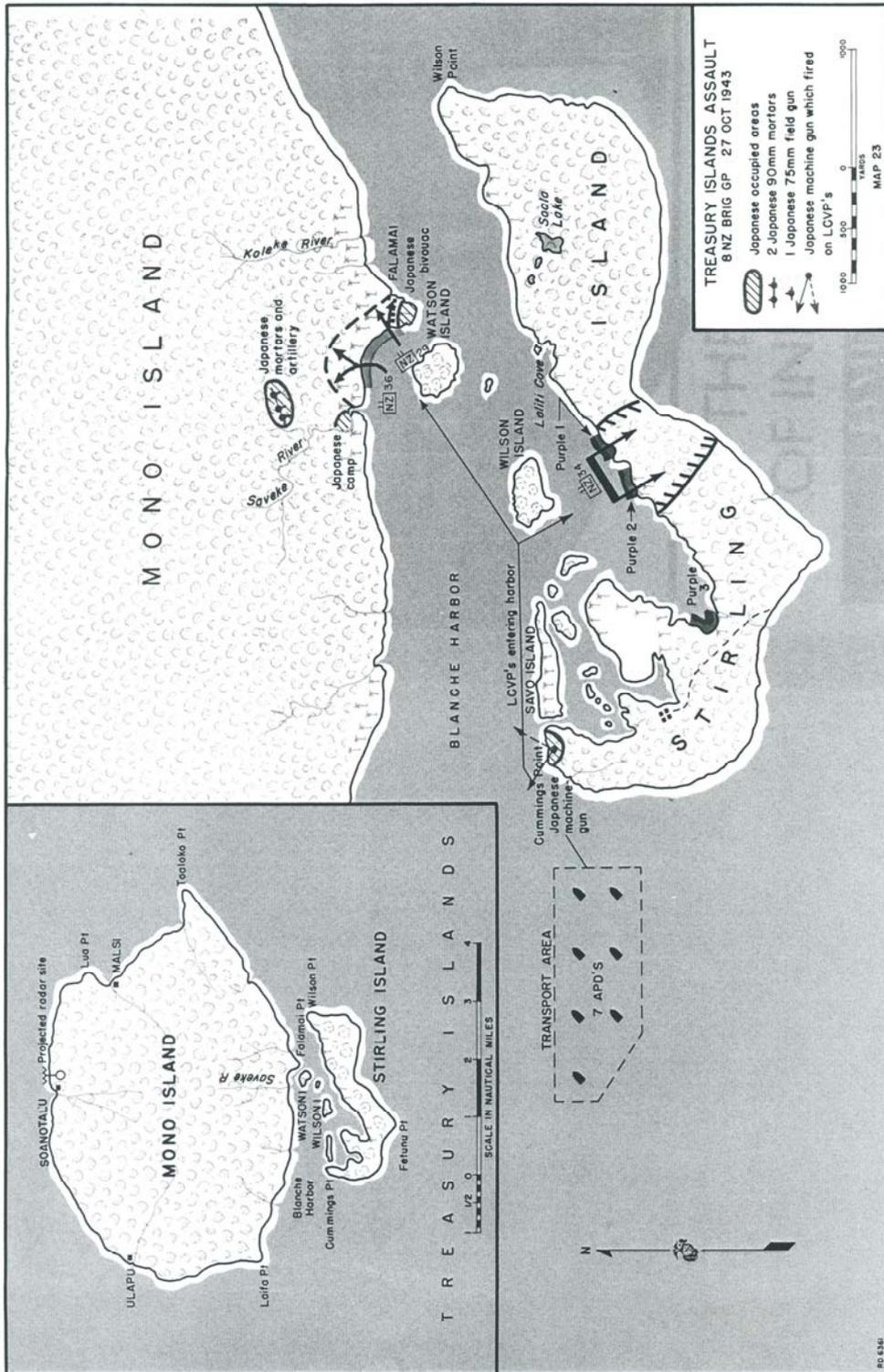
¹²⁹ J.D. Ladd, Assault from the Sea 1939-45: The Craft, the Landings, the Men, New York: Hippocrene Books, 1976, pp.190-191.

¹³⁰ Rentz, Bougainville, p.97.

¹³¹ Archives NZ, WAI, 1DAZ151/1/23, Report on Operations, 30 November 1943.

¹³² Ibid., p.97.

TREASURY ISLANDS ASSAULT, JOHN N. RENTZ, BOUGAINVILLE AND THE NORTHERN SOLOMONS, NASHVILLE: THE BATTERY PRESS, 2001, P.97.



The other beach near Falamai was an obvious landing site and the Japanese had three machine-gun positions there, but initial opposition was comparatively light, probably as the Japanese had pulled back during the naval bombardment. Unfortunately, movement in the tree line by the first wave attracted the attention of American personnel in follow-up waves and friendly fire occurred.¹³³ At about 0735 a well-concealed Japanese machine-gun position opened fire on the follow-up wave, forcing LST 399 to raise its loading ramp. The anti-aircraft guns on the bow could not be depressed sufficiently to reply. In an action later celebrated by John Wayne in the movie 'The Fighting Seabees', Aurelio Tassone lowered the blade of his bulldozer and advanced on the Japanese position, crushing the defenders¹³⁴. Because the number of landing craft available was limited, the New Zealand troops were packed into them and could not take cover behind the shield of the ramp.

8 Brigade Recce Company's Bren gun carriers were landed to cut off the Japanese retreat¹³⁵. A mangrove swamp prevented this, no doubt to the relief of the soldiers, who would have faced lethal grenade attacks and rifle fire from Japanese in the trees. Open-decked Bren gun carriers were sitting ducks, as the Australians had found at Buna¹³⁶. The carriers were used instead hauling ammunition and cargo up to front-line units.¹³⁷

Two 75 mm mountain guns and a 90 mm mortar fired down on the beach-head at about 0735 hrs, coinciding with the arrival of the LSTs. Two LSTs were hit, casualties were sustained and unloading was held up. Disembarking troops also came under fire from concealed machine-gun, mortar and artillery positions. Damage directly attributable to Japanese artillery consisted of one 90 mm AA gun destroyed, one 25 pounder damaged, a Bofors gun, ammunition and medical stores destroyed. Around noon soldiers from 36 Battalion stormed the Japanese mountain-gun positions and continued up hill to destroy a 90 mm mortar. The destruction of the Japanese artillery effectively ended their ability

¹³³ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 154/1/24, Appendix 3, p.1. See also George Hodgson Interview.

¹³⁴ Incorrectly attributed by Admiral Fort to 'a resourceful New Zealander'. Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15/1 Operation Kiwi Report on occupation of the Treasury Islands, G.H. Fort, p.15. Tassone was awarded the Silver Star. William Bradford Huie, Can Do – The Story of the Seabees, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1997, p.197.

¹³⁵ George Hodgson Interview.

¹³⁶ An Australian attempt to use Bren-gun Carriers as tanks at Buna had ended disastrously. Lida Mayo Bloody Buna, London: New English Library, 1977, p.121.

¹³⁷ George Hodgson Interview.

to dispute the beach-head. Meanwhile troops from 34 Battalion landed unopposed on Stirling. The HQ of 8 Brigade and Artillery units joined them.¹³⁸



Captured Japanese artillery on Mono Island. Alexander Turnbull Library. WH-0295.

The invasion was clearly successful. The troops had landed in good order, a radar unit had been established and would soon be operational, artillery positions had been set up on Stirling and casualties¹³⁹ had been relatively light. The enemy reaction had been sluggish and disjointed. On the night of 27/28 October the Japanese infantry used knee mortars,¹⁴⁰ and harassing rifle fire and probed the New Zealand perimeter.¹⁴¹ On 29 October patrols made no contact and Row concluded that the Japanese were withdrawing northwards.¹⁴²

The landing at Soanatalu had been unopposed. Logan Force, a combined force of Seabees and New Zealand soldiers established a defensive perimeter, the radar site was

¹³⁸ Row Report, pp.7-8.

¹³⁹ 21 New Zealanders killed, 70 wounded; 9 Americans killed and 15 wounded. Row Report, p.8.

¹⁴⁰ The 50 mm Type 89 (1929) grenade launcher/light mortar was standard issue in the Imperial Japanese Army. It had a rifled barrel which gave it a good range out to 700 yards. Erroneously called a “knee mortar” by Allied forces due to a mistranslation. Phillip Jowett, *The Japanese Army 1939-45*, Oxford: Osprey Press, 2002, p.41.

¹⁴¹ Row Report, p.9.

¹⁴² Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 151/1/23, Appendix 19.

inspected and the beach was confirmed as able to take an LCT. The radar station was operating by 31 October and initially there were only minor skirmishes with the Japanese. That changed as the Japanese retreated northwards and the force at Soanatalu stood in their way. On the night of 1-2 November about 80 to 90 Japanese attempted to overrun the perimeter to reach a Japanese barge on the beach, held by three American sailors and seven New Zealand soldiers. Two New Zealanders were killed and three wounded. Some forty to fifty Japanese were killed. The Japanese were again held off on the night of 2-3 November and further desperate attempts gradually tapered off. Follow-up patrols encountered small groups but otherwise there was no further action in the Soanatalu area.¹⁴³

A second flight of reinforcements arrived at the beach-head on 1 November and Row began to feel more secure. The following day three New Zealand soldiers encountered a Japanese soldier who approached them shouting 'don't shoot'. On getting close enough he armed and threw a grenade which wounded one of the soldiers. The Japanese soldier was promptly killed.¹⁴⁴ Patrols combed the island sometimes encountering Japanese soldiers. Although 8 prisoners were taken these had either been badly wounded or had surrendered to the natives. The Japanese were not inclined to surrender.¹⁴⁵ By 12 November¹⁴⁶ the island was secure and was made even more so by the successful landings of American forces at Empress Augusta Bay. Row implemented his plan for holding the Treasury Islands and the New Zealand forces went into garrison mode.¹⁴⁷

The biggest cause of casualties in Goodtime was bombing. A Fighter Control Team was set up on Fort's flagship, the USS Eaton, but the space allocated to it on a small destroyer must have been limited. A fighter command and early warning system was landed in the first echelon on Stirling, but it was not fully operational until the radar installation was set up at Soanatalu.¹⁴⁸ Indirect air support took the form of bombing raids against Japanese airfields, which began prior to Goodtime. Direct air support

¹⁴³ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 153/1/37, Appendix G.

¹⁴⁴ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 152/1/38, Appendix 2, p.3.

¹⁴⁵ Row Report, p.11.

¹⁴⁶ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 121/1/1/16

¹⁴⁷ Row Report, p.12.

¹⁴⁸ Archives NZ, WAI, 1Z151/1/23.

came from fighters over the invasion convoy and the Treasury Islands. Seven Japanese aircraft were shot down, but the destroyer USS Cony was hit and forced to withdraw and supply dumps were bombed, inflicting 11 New Zealand casualties.¹⁴⁹ RNZAF fighters directed by American Fighter Controllers also shot down four Japanese fighters.¹⁵⁰ However, only a limited number of aircraft could be over the Treasury Islands at one time, as they had to be periodically re-armed and re-fuelled. Once the shipping had retreated from the Treasury Islands, air resources were allocated elsewhere.

Operation Squarepeg, the taking of the Green Islands, was the final major military action of 3NZ Division. It involved 14 Brigade, Divisional HQ and support troops and was an amphibious operation. It was totally successful and earned high praise from American Commanders. Combat was limited and casualties were light.

As always in the Pacific War, the ability to establish an airfield and project air power was the key aim. Halsey saw Squarepeg as a step towards taking Kavieng, providing an airfield from which fighters could cover bomber strikes against it, but he thought that the seizure of Kavieng could not take place for some time, leaving a hiatus in major operations that he feared 'would kill the momentum of the South Pacific Drive'. Nimitz wanted 'some intermediate operation undertaken in order to retain the initiative and to provoke enemy reactions which would enable us to engage his forces.' The Green Islands fitted 'the geometric requirements' in that they were close enough to Kavieng for fighter operations but also within fighter coverage of the Allied airfields at Torokina. The seizure of Emirau was considered as an alternative to Kavieng and it was thought the Green Islands operation would assist this as well.¹⁵¹ Furthermore, the establishment of a PT Boat base would enable the interdiction of Japanese barges between New Ireland and Bougainville.

¹⁴⁹ William N. Hess, Pacific Sweep - The 5th & 13th Fighter Commands in World War II, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1974, pp.134-5. The '18th Fighter Group' referred to was No. 18(F) Squadron RNZAF.

¹⁵⁰ J.M.S. Ross, Royal New Zealand Air Force, Wellington: War History Branch, 1955, reprinted by Battery Press, 1993, pp.204-205. See also Archives NZ, Air 150 Operations Book 43-44 which details the activities of 15 Squadron RNZAF.

¹⁵¹ Archives NZ, Series 9, S14, Operations, Halsey to Nimitz/King, 29 April 1944.

Nissan, the main coral atoll of the group, is 37 miles north-norwest of Bougainville and 55 miles from the southeastern end of New Britain. It is 9 miles north to south and 5 miles east to west, with an opening in the northwest allowing access to a lagoon. There are two small islands, Barahun and Sirot, just above sea level and covered in thick vegetation and coconut plantations. Although aerial photos indicated the practicability of building an airfield, there was no certainty. Nor was it certain that large landing craft could be beached.¹⁵²

What made the Green Islands attractive to American planners made the operation risky. With the main Japanese base at Rabaul only 115 miles away, and Buka 36 miles to the south-east, a vigorous response was likely, especially as the Green Islands were an important link in the Japanese supply system from Rabaul to Buka. As at Vella Lavella and the Treasury Islands, there was substantial risk. Time was allowed for the 'partial neutralisation of the powerful enemy air base at Rabaul'.¹⁵³

On 24 January Admiral Halsey set 15 February as D-Day and gave 3NZ Division the task.¹⁵⁴ Admiral Wilkinson became, as Commander of Task Force 31, the overall commander, with Barrowclough resuming tactical command of the landing.¹⁵⁵ Consequently, the headquarters of 3NZ Division shifted from Vella Lavella to Guadalcanal on 5 January.

14 Brigade had continued regular patrols around Vella Lavella. In addition, 30 Battalion was selected for further amphibious training on Barga Island on 1-3 December 1943. For the rest of the Brigade further specialist jungle training took place, involving fire and movement exercises. The Brigade was ready for further combat operations by December.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² National Archives US, FE25/A16-3(3) Commander Third Amphibious Force to Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet Seizure and Occupation of Green Islands 15 February to 15 March 1944, 24 March 1944 (hereinafter 'Wilkinson Report'). Author's Collection. A PT Boat reconnaissance on 10 January established the navigability of two channels, p.4.

¹⁵³ Although the seizure of the Green Islands could have been undertaken by 15 January 1944 it was thought expedient to degrade Japanese air capabilities and the target date was set for 15 February. Wilkinson Report.

¹⁵⁴ 'In reviewing the troops available for the operation it appeared that those most readily available, and of undoubted competence, were the 14th New Zealand Brigade (the equivalent of a combat team) then on duty in Vella Lavella...'. Wilkinson Report, p.4.

¹⁵⁵ Rentz, Bougainville and the Northern Solomons p.116.

¹⁵⁶ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 121/1/1/11, Appendix IV & XI.

There were risks involved in the Operation due to Japanese forces on New Ireland, New Britain, Bougainville and Buka. Barrowclough decided that '...my force should be strengthened by the inclusion of the 144 Ind Bty and the Tank Squadron, though it might not be possible to get the latter organisation into the island until the second or third echelon'.¹⁵⁷

As coast-watchers had been unable to operate in the area,¹⁵⁸ it was decided to send a force to discover beach information and the enemy's strength. Dubbed a 'Commando Raid', this was more concerned with obtaining information than destroying enemy units. As with the Cowan Patrols, there was a risk of alerting the Japanese to the invasion.¹⁵⁹ Despite the success of the Cowan patrols and the existence of a specialist USMC amphibious reconnaissance team, COMSOPAC decided to send a larger force.

Barrowclough commented that

the Green Island project involved certain reconnaissance work which had hitherto generally been done by sending small parties ashore from a submarine. Green Island, however, is a very small island and has a native population of 1,500, most of whom were thought to be Japanese sympathisers and COMSOPAC decided that it would be impracticable to send a secret reconnaissance party on to the island with any hope of getting the information he requires. He therefore asked me to undertake a reconnaissance in force and I think I can do that satisfactorily by using 400 men of the 30th Battalion which is the only infantry unit in my command which has not yet had battle experience. They are all keen to undertake it. The plan is to land them on the island at midnight, leave them there for the whole of the following day and evacuate them the following midnight. In order that the information they get can be put to practical use, it is essential that this party should go in some 10 days before the main operation. Naturally, I would have preferred not to give this forewarning of our intention but I agree that it is inevitable. We are calling the operation not a reconnaissance in force but a commando raid. We shall probably contrive to

¹⁵⁷ War Diary GOC 3NZ Division 31 December 1943, p.38.

¹⁵⁸ Shaw and Kane, p.508.

¹⁵⁹ Archives NZ, DAZ 121/1/1/15, Appendix 1.

leave behind under as realistic circumstances as possible a bogus order for the operation describing it as a commando raid directing the troops to destroy any equipment used in the barge staging operations which the Japanese are carrying out. I shall instruct them to patrol at length inland with the object of finding and destroying any dumps of oil, fuel, etc. The real object, of course, will be to investigate the ground with a view to ascertaining its suitability for airfield construction and also to undertake certain hydrographic surveys that are requisite if we are to ascertain that we can effect landings at the points we desire.¹⁶⁰

The 'Commando' unit was simply 300 men selected from 30 Battalion, commanded by Lt Colonel F.C. Cornwall, and consisting of A, D and C Companies, 1 Platoon from B Company, mortar sections, a reconnaissance section, intelligence personnel, signals personnel, a medical officer and orderlies and the Padre of 30 Battalion.¹⁶¹ However, the use of the word 'Commando' cast the operation in a glamorous light and the men of 30 Battalion readily embraced the term.¹⁶² Attached to the unit were 30 USN intelligence, communication, airfield, landing craft and beach specialists, mainly from Admiral Wilkinson's HQ but including New Zealand Artillery, Engineer and ASC officers. A former plantation owner, Lt. F.P. Archer, attached to the British Solomon Islands Administration, provided expertise in pidgin.¹⁶³ The primary role of the New Zealand troops was to protect these specialists¹⁶⁴.

¹⁶⁰ Archives NZ, Puttick 5 W1427/5.

¹⁶¹ Third Division Histories Committee, Pacific Kiwis; Wellington: AW & AH Reed, 1947, p.89.

¹⁶² The troops themselves referred to it as a 'Commando Raid', Army Board, Guadalcanal to Nissan, p.40.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ The raid illustrates the complex nature of amphibious operations. The force was commanded by Captain Ralph Earle, USN, the New Zealand troops were commanded by Lt. Col. Cornwell and the naval unit was commanded by Commander J. D. Smith, USN.. Wilkinson Report, p.4. The principle generally was that the naval commander remained in command until the land forces had beached and then a transfer of command to the land force commander occurred.



Face painting prior to the commando raid on the Green Islands. Alexander Turnbull Library.

The unit sailed from Vella Lavella on the night of 30 January 1944 in three Assault Personnel Destroyers (APD¹⁶⁵) with four destroyer escorts, and two PT Boats early the following morning. The personnel were offloaded with some difficulty due to sea conditions into LCVPs which were then escorted by two PT Boats from Bougainville. Seasickness was rife.¹⁶⁶ One PT Boat led a column of 12 landing craft through the gap between Barahun and Nissan and into the lagoon when tidal conditions were right. Frank Rennie commented – ‘it would have been disastrous if we had been fired upon from high ground as the 12 barges went through the gap.’¹⁶⁷ The Allied personnel landed on Nissan and the ships returned to the Treasury Islands to be out of the reach of Japanese aircraft before daylight. The following day patrols examined Barahun. Two companies were sent across the lagoon to Tangalan Plantation on the eastern side. As their landing craft surged across the lagoon an RNZAF Ventura Bomber came in low and attempted to communicate by Aldis Signal Lamp, eventually dropping a roll of toilet paper on the beach. The message contained in it was, unfortunately, not

¹⁶⁵ USS Talbot, USS Waters and USS Dickerson.

¹⁶⁶ Frank Rennie, Regular Soldier - A Life in the New Zealand Army, Auckland: Endeavour Press, 1986, p.50.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

recovered. The pilot was attempting to warn the troops that a large Japanese barge had landed on the seaward side of the atoll.¹⁶⁸

Three other parties in barges explored the beaches around the lagoon and the Mission Station to the south. Lt. Archer made contact with friendly locals who provided information on the Japanese. While returning, a Japanese barge was discovered moored in a small bay under trees. The US Naval Officer, Commander Smith, could not detect any Japanese, but as a landing craft neared the barge, another well-camouflaged barge was discovered alongside and rifle and heavy machine gun fire broke out from the coral cliff above the beach. Unfortunately the Allied force's eagerness to close with the Japanese meant the muzzles of their machine guns were knocked skywards by tree branches and they could not return fire. The landing craft coxswain and a gunner were hit, as were two men who tried to take their places, and Lt. O'Dowd, the senior New Zealand officer, was killed. Fortunately, another landing craft opened Bren gun fire on the Japanese, enabling the first to withdraw. Commander Smith wanted to return to destroy the Japanese, but the New Zealand commander insisted that the reconnaissance missions be finished first. Afterwards an assault was launched on the Japanese positions, but six Zero Fighters¹⁶⁹ appeared and began bombing and strafing the Allied landing craft. One beached and disgorged two platoons who found themselves with Japanese troops in front and strafing Zeros to their rear.¹⁷⁰ One American soldier was killed and one wounded. The scene is described in Pacific Kiwis:

'It will be our turn soon', everybody thought as they lay in fox holes in the plantations. Some in their eagerness scooped sand out of their trenches with their hands, others with arms like flails shoveled deeper into their slit trenches to get more protection. The barges were still being strafed while one badly aimed bomb fell somewhere on the seaward side of the coast. Why the Zeros failed to

¹⁶⁸ Archives NZ DA 428/3/2 'Past a Joke', Official War Correspondent NZEF, 6 February 1944.

¹⁶⁹ Mitsubishi Zero-Sen A6M2 Fighters were equipped with two 20 mm cannon and a 13.2 mm calibre machine gun and were capable of carrying two 60 kilogram bombs. Against troops packed into thinly protected landing craft this fire power was potentially very lethal. The Wilkinson Report refers to seven Zeros p.5.

¹⁷⁰ Rennie, p.54.

make another run and strafe the beaches is a mystery, for had they done so, casualties would have been certain.¹⁷¹

Frank Rennie observed that 'The combined fire power of the barges must have kept the Japanese from coming too low, but with the advantage they had, why they didn't press this home will always be a mystery. Our barges were peppered with holes including the one carrying the explosives. We would have been very badly placed had the Japanese concentrated on the barges - and on us.'¹⁷²

The air attack was sufficient to deter further offensive action and as it was getting dark the two platoons reboarded and headed for Barahun. There they waited until midnight for the return of APDs. A receding tide and darkness hampered the withdrawal. At one point a landing craft became grounded and had to be manhandled into deeper water.¹⁷³ Sea conditions outside the lagoon were rough but the troops were able to re-embark, albeit perilously,¹⁷⁴ and return to Vella Lavella.¹⁷⁵

Much valuable information was obtained, including details of the suitability of landing beaches and the effects of tides. Locals advised that there were roughly a hundred Japanese to the south of Nissan. Positions were marked out for the placement of artillery. A mystery was also resolved. Aerial photographs had shown small clearings at regular intervals around the coast, apparently made by the Japanese. However, the Allied force established that the work had been done by a local cargo cult.¹⁷⁶

The lack of air cover almost proved catastrophic¹⁷⁷. Fighter aircraft would have been near the limit of their operational range but missions against Rabaul, which was much further away, were being routinely undertaken. There were airfields on Bougainville, including the RNZAF Base at Torokina.¹⁷⁸ US night fighters may actually have been

¹⁷¹ Third Division Histories Committee, Pacific Kiwis, p. 95.

¹⁷² Rennie, p.55.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Rennie describes an American officer being badly injured by being crushed between barge and ship.

¹⁷⁵ Archives NZ, WAIL, DAZ 156/1/40, Appendix, 30 NZ Battalion Commando Raid.

¹⁷⁶ Archives NZ, WAIL, 1, DAZ 158/1/26, p.13.

¹⁷⁷ The operations order provided for support from 'Black Cats for the approach and retirement of the Transport Unit'. Archives US FE25/A16-3(1) Task Force Thirty One Operation Order No 1 – 44 Rear Admiral T.S. Wilkinson, 25 January 1944. Author's Collection. The 'Black Cats' were a specialised PB5A Catalina flying boat squadron involved with night maritime attack operations.

¹⁷⁸ For Squarepeg the South Pacific Air Force was directed to provide aerial reconnaissance and 'to provide maximum practicable air coverage and support during the operation'. Wilkinson Report, p.5.

in the vicinity,¹⁷⁹ as aero engines were heard in the distance as the troops awaited evacuation at midnight.

The composition of the force was also odd - not small enough to be stealthy, nor big enough to deal with substantial opposition. It is arguable that a small stealthy force would have been preferable. Furthermore, it is curious why the US Marine Corps had not used its specialist reconnaissance teams to investigate the Green Islands.¹⁸⁰ The feasibility of a stealthy reconnaissance is further shown by the fact that as the Official History notes

the first really accurate information which paved the way for the raid was obtained on the night of 10 January, when a special naval party in two American motor torpedo boats surveyed without detection the two lagoon entrances and found that the southern channel between Barahun and Nissan Islands was 16 ft deep and 40-50 ft wide. It would therefore take the larger landing craft, including heavy LST's.¹⁸¹

If PT Boats could carry out an undetected reconnaissance, they could presumably have landed a specialist team. A PT Boat well camouflaged with netting in one of the inlets would have been much less susceptible to discovery than 12 LCVPs. The answer probably lies in the fact that the Americans knew the Green Islands were used as a staging point for barge traffic and Japanese were 'present in light strength'.¹⁸² By sending a relatively large force the Americans were anticipating contact. Yet such a large force could only alert the Japanese to the planned invasion. Indeed the raid was set for 31 January, which was considered the latest time at which information could be used to assist in the attack without giving the Japanese enough time to reinforce the garrison.

When a report from a Japanese lookout was received on 31 January, the Commander of the South East Area immediately ordered an aerial reconnaissance and a fighter bomber strike. The attacking pilots reported the presence of six motor torpedo boats. Japanese

¹⁷⁹ Third Division Histories Committee, *Pacific Kiwis*, p.96.

¹⁸⁰ Bruce F. Meyers, *Swift, Silent and Deadly - Marine Amphibious Reconnaissance in the Pacific 1942-45*, Annapolis: Naval Institute, 2004.

¹⁸¹ Gillespie, p.171.

¹⁸² Wilkinson Report, p.3.

forces on the Green Islands signalled that they were being attacked, had incurred heavy losses and were going to destroy their code books. They requested reinforcements. These were despatched in two submarines, which left Rabaul on 1 February and landed 77 men on the Green Islands. Meanwhile some of the original Japanese garrison returned on 5 February.¹⁸³ The net effect of the Commando raid had been to increase potential opposition. Furthermore, the basis on which COMSOPAC ordered the raid proved to be flawed. The Green Islanders were pro-Allied¹⁸⁴ and provided useful intelligence.

Again there was meticulous planning for the main landings. For 37 Battalion, Lieutenant McKenzie, who had been involved with the Commando Raid, helped construct a sand-table model of the terrain. Aerial photos were also used in its construction. It was expected that every man in the Battalion would have the opportunity of studying it.¹⁸⁵ On 3 February Lieutenant Dean, an Intelligence Officer, lectured company commanders on terrain and Lieutenant Col. Sugden outlined the Brigade plan whereby 30 Battalion would secure the entrance, followed by 35 and 37 Battalions landing in the vicinity of Tangalan. Lieutenant Zivaneth, the US Naval Gunfire Officer, and a naval gunfire observation party consisting of Lieutenant Kelly, USMC and seven Marines were attached to 37 Battalion. Lectures were given by Captain Brooker of the 3NZ Division Tank Squadron on infantry tank co-operation and Lieutenant Bartos was sent to 14 Brigade as Liaison Officer and Air Support Control Officer.¹⁸⁶

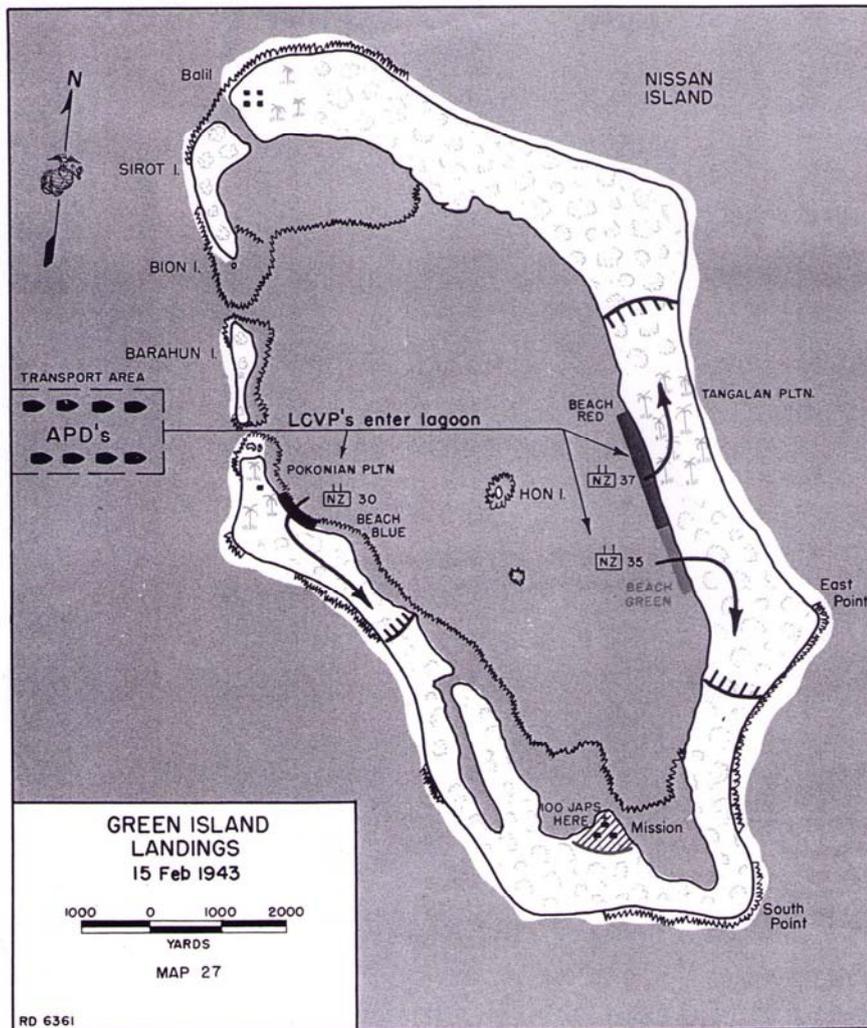
¹⁸³ Archives NZ, WAI, Series 1, DA 438.3/3, 'The Japanese View'.

¹⁸⁴ Morison comments that the Allied forces 'found the Green Islands to be inhabited by some 1,200 Melanesians who were so friendly to us and so hostile to the Japanese that in the operation plan the usual preliminary naval and air bombardment was omitted.' Morison, p.414.

¹⁸⁵ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 158/1/26, War Diary 37 Battalion.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

GREEN ISLAND LANDINGS. THIRD DIVISION HISTORIES COMMITTEE, JOHN N. RENTZ, BOUGAINVILLE AND THE NORTHERN SOLOMONS, NASHVILLE: THE BATTERY PRESS, 2001, P.117



Whereas in 3NZ Division's previous operations the amphibious force had sortied from Guadalcanal, now separate groups came from Guadalcanal and Vella Lavella. The slowest ships sailed first with the aim of all arriving off the Green Islands simultaneously.¹⁸⁷ The force consisted of 8 APDs, 13 LCIs, 7 LSTs and 6 LCTs. Two task forces of destroyers and cruisers were to act as protective screens around the Green

¹⁸⁷ The naval components carried out 'echelon movement', with successive echelons of varying speeds leap frogging during the night preceding the attack, arriving as their respective services were needed and departing as soon as those were concluded. Thus the assault wave was carried in APDs arriving at dawn, a secondary wave of troops in LCIs shortly thereafter and a third wave of troops, equipment and supplies in LST's an hour later. Finally a detachment of LCTs were to arrive in the early afternoon. Wilkinson Report, p.6.

Islands. The Allied convoy was so large that it was inevitably detected by the Japanese. This occurred on the morning of 14 February 1944. An all-out attack at night by 32 Japanese aircraft led to twelve of them being shot down.¹⁸⁸ The USS St. Louis was damaged.¹⁸⁹ RNZAF No. 14 and No. 18 Squadrons were designated to provide fighter cover and managed to keep eight aircraft over the Green Islands¹⁹⁰ in conjunction with US Marine fighters from VMF-212 and VMF-216.

D-Day was 15 February 1944. Minesweepers arrived late and it was fortunate that no mines had been laid. Nor had the Japanese sighted artillery on the entrance to the lagoon. The usual preparatory naval and aerial bombardment was foregone.¹⁹¹ The landing was unopposed and air raids were driven off by US fighters and anti-aircraft fire, so 'by the time the New Zealanders came on the station the attack was over and they saw no enemy aircraft during the day.'¹⁹² Many larger landing craft flew barrage balloons to deter low-level attacks.

At 0641 the first wave of assault boats left the line of departure. Assault troops from 30 Battalion landed from the lagoon side of Pokonian Plantation and a follow-up wave from 35 and 37 Battalions landed at Tangalan at 0740. Altogether, 4,344 tons of supplies were landed on the first day.¹⁹³ Patrols fanning out from the landing sites encountered no resistance. The Headquarters for 3NZ Division was located at Pokonian whilst the Advanced Headquarters of 14 Brigade was placed at Tangalan. Fire from a Japanese barge to the south-east of Pokonian was rapidly dealt with.¹⁹⁴ A more substantial Japanese response was an air raid on the night of 15-16 February, when 20 bombs were dropped from high altitude and five locals were wounded. On 16 February a small Japanese garrison of roughly 70 soldiers was discovered near the Catholic Mission in the south of Nissan. On 17 February the process of patrolling and probing continued. A company from 30 Battalion landed on Sirot. During a brief fire fight the

¹⁸⁸ Archives NZ, WAI, Series 1, DA 438.3/3, 'Japanese View'.

¹⁸⁹ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 121/1/1/15, Appendix 1.

¹⁹⁰ Ross, p.243.

¹⁹¹ This was 'to avoid endangering the large number of natives who had been found friendly by the reconnaissance...' Wilkinson Report, p.6.

¹⁹² Ross, p.243.

¹⁹³ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 121/1/1/15, Appendix 1.

¹⁹⁴ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 155/1/26. Two LCI Gunboats returned fire. Wilkinson Report, p.9.

New Zealanders suffered 5 killed and 3 wounded and the Japanese 16 killed.¹⁹⁵ In a further clash south of Tanaheran five New Zealanders were 5 killed and 7 wounded and Japanese casualties were thought to be 62 killed.

Further patrols established that there was a Japanese position on Sau and on 23 February an infantry company of 37 Battalion was landed and destroyed a small group of Japanese soldiers. Organised resistance ended and the New Zealand units went into defensive positions¹⁹⁶. Meanwhile Seabees commenced work to create airstrips, roads and other facilities. A mere 18 days after D-Day an Allied aircraft was able to make an emergency landing. By 7 March the airfield was able to be used for staging aircraft on their way to bomb Rabaul. Naval base facilities were also established and by 17 February a PT Boat Squadron was patrolling from the Green Islands.¹⁹⁷

The first real combat use of armour by 3NZ Division came during Squarepeg. Its Tank Squadron was equipped with Valentine Mark III Tanks and Mark III Close Support Tanks, which had proven extremely vulnerable in the Desert War, but were considered adequate against the Japanese in the Solomons, who were not likely to have any tanks. In the formation of 3NZ Division, Barrowclough had reservations about accepting tanks in lieu of an additional infantry brigade but did so when it was clear that he was saddled with a two infantry brigade division. The Tank Squadron had been deployed initially to New Caledonia. It arrived on Guadalcanal on 26 September 1943 and worked with 8 Brigade developing infantry tank co-operation.

¹⁹⁵ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 156/1/40, Appendix Sirot Op.

¹⁹⁶ For several days afterward occasional stray enemy were found and one prisoner taken. Wilkinson Report, p.10.

¹⁹⁷ Rentz, Bougainville, p.117.



Landing of tanks on the Green Islands. Alexander Turnbull Library. 044755.

It was decided to use the Tank Squadron in Operation Squarepeg, even though 14 Brigade had not trained with them and shipping limitations meant only eight tanks could be deployed initially, with the remainder to follow 5 days later.¹⁹⁸ Unloading was completed by mid-morning on 15 February. The next few days were spent carrying out probes in concert with infantry. No enemy contact occurred and members of the Squadron were ‘brownd off’ that they were not going to be involved in combat.¹⁹⁹ However, on 20 February Japanese were encountered at Tanaheran and Commander Stronach of the Brigade Carrier Platoon requested help. Major Rutherford, commander of the Squadron, ordered two tanks to accompany him to Tanaheran. They met accurate sniper fire, one losing five periscopes,²⁰⁰ but succeeded in recovering a wounded soldier. When the remaining tanks arrived, they laid down general area fire. Major Bullen of 30 Battalion was unwilling to attempt a tank-infantry assault because his men had not trained for it. He began a set-piece attack with mortar fire followed up by an infantry assault. That concluded the combat activities of 3NZ Division Tank Squadron.

Overall, what use was the Tank Squadron? Firstly, 3NZ Division was significantly under strength and the addition of armour was intended to be a force enhancer. Whilst

¹⁹⁸ Plowman and Thomas, p.41.

¹⁹⁹ Third Division Histories Committee Tanks, MMG and Ordnance, Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1947, p.47.

²⁰⁰ Plowman and Thomas, p.44.

New Zealand lacked the manpower to give the Division three brigades, it did have light tanks available. Secondly, the Japanese had used armour successfully in China, Malaya, Burma and the Philippines, and they did have it on Rabaul. Thirdly, there was the question of the Division's anti-tank capability. It did have 25 pounders, which were multi-purpose, and AA units could have been converted to an anti-tank role. Otherwise anti-tank weapons consisted of only the Boys rifle and grenades.

Why, given the shortage of shipping space, were tanks deployed during Squarepeg? The Commando Raid had revealed that the Japanese defenders were few and there was no sign of armour. Nor was it likely that there would be a Japanese counter attack involving tanks, as Allied naval supremacy was virtually complete. Moreover, the Tank Squadron had not trained with 14 Brigade, which severely limited its utility. One answer is that Barrowclough wanted his men to have as much experience as possible. If further operations had been undertaken, the experience of loading and offloading tanks and deploying them in combat would have been very useful. A case can also be made that the deployment of armour was prudent. It was unclear what the Division would face and the tanks would have been valuable against static Japanese fortifications, such as pillboxes.

By the end of February 1944 3NZ Division had demonstrated to its American ally that it was very proficient in amphibious operations.²⁰¹ Each Brigade had successfully carried out one amphibious operation and had learned from the experience.²⁰² The Division had also demonstrated their skills in fighting the Japanese and shown that it could work with US troops. There was a uniformly high opinion of 3NZ Division soldiers from American personnel.²⁰³

On 7 March Barrowclough told Puttick that '3rd NZ Division has been designated as Area Reserves for the Kavieng Operation. There is an indication, still somewhat vague,

²⁰¹ With Squarepeg Wilkinson was impressed with 'the landing of the entire Brigade in less than two hours'. Wilkinson Report, p.12.

²⁰² In reference to the planning for Squarepeg, Barrowclough wrote to Puttick, 'I have now got together a very efficient planning and movement control staff which breaks the back of most of our loading problems', Archives NZ, Puttick 5 W1427/5, Barrowclough to Puttick, 2 February 1944.

²⁰³ General Barrett told Brigadier Dove that he 'was given the choice of the 3rd NZ Division or any US or Australian division and he had selected 3rd NZ Division, of whose qualities he has the highest opinion'. Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15 Puttick to Fraser, 13 October 1943.

that the 8th Brigade may be required as part of the landing force at Kavieng. Target date for Kavieng remains 1 April 1944.²⁰⁴ He considered that if the assaulting US Marine Corps Division was relieved by 3NZ Division 'we might have to take over from them - a most unsatisfying role where we would do the dirty work and the Marines would take the credit.'²⁰⁵ If 8 Brigade were used, he wanted 'to send the whole Tank Squadron ... if I can get shipping for it and also 144 IND Bty and at least half the Bofors Regt'.²⁰⁶ Puttick in turn advised Fraser that 8 Brigade might be part of the landing force and that while Allied air superiority was probable, considerable Japanese resistance was to be expected. He concluded 'I consider the proposed operation a very necessary and reasonable one, offering every prospect of complete success.'²⁰⁷ However, because of uncertainty about its future, the Brigade's role was cancelled. On 11 March, Barrowclough cabled Puttick, 'I am advised that the 8th Brigade will not now be required as part of the landing force at Kavieng.'²⁰⁸

It is difficult to assess the military effectiveness²⁰⁹ of 3NZ Division. Firstly, it was committed to combat for only a short period and carried out a limited number of operations at brigade level or below. Secondly, it had undergone a considerable metamorphosis from an under-strength, ill-equipped, ill-trained unit fit only for static warfare through to an under-strength but well-equipped, well-trained and well-led unit capable of complex combat operations. There is no direct point of comparison with 2NZ Division, which fought a totally different type of warfare, received the cream of New Zealand's manpower, was equipped from British stocks and operated within a familiar British command structure.

²⁰⁴ Archives NZ, WAI 9, S1 Barrowclough to Puttick, 7 March 1944.

²⁰⁵ Archives NZ, Puttick 5 W1427/5, Barrowclough to Puttick, 7 March 1944.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Archives NZ, AD 12, 28/5, Puttick to Fraser, 8 March 1944.

²⁰⁸ Documents Relating to New Zealand's Participation in the Second World War, Vol. III, Wellington: Historical Publications Branch, 1963, p.429.

²⁰⁹ 'Military effectiveness is the ability of an armed service to prosecute military operations and employ weaponry in military operations. It is therefore a measure of the quality of the army's personnel – not the quality of its weaponry or the quantity of its men or material. Military effectiveness refers to the ability of soldiers and officers to perform on the battlefield, to accomplish military missions and to execute the strategies devised by their political-military leaders'. Kenneth M. Pollack, Arabs at War – Military Effectiveness 1948 – 1991, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002, pp.3-4.

To assess 3NZ Division's military effectiveness, it is necessary to look to other units that fought in the South Pacific in similar conditions at roughly the same time. This means essentially AIF and Militia units, and American Army units.

A comparison can be made between the units of the early 3NZ Division and the Australian force sent to garrison Rabaul, like Fiji an important strategic point. The garrison of 1400 consisted of AIF soldiers, New Guinea Volunteer Rifles, Coastal Defence guns, anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns and Engineers.²¹⁰ Like the New Zealanders in Fiji, they had basic training but not in jungle warfare, and were too few to resist a major attack. The brigade-sized Japanese South Seas Force easily overwhelmed them. Like Wellington, Canberra had deployed too few resources to secure a strategic point. Had the Japanese won at Midway, they planned to seize Fiji. Until the arrival of massive American reinforcements in 1942 there were insufficient New Zealand troops to hold it. If the Japanese had devoted sufficient air, naval and land resources to assaulting it, the garrison would have succumbed like the defenders of Wake Island, the Philippines, Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. Poorly trained, ill-equipped troops, led in an indifferent fashion and deprived of air support, proved easy prey to experienced Japanese troops.

Luckily by the time 3NZ Division was committed to combat it had had almost a year to complete basic training, to become decently equipped and to undertake amphibious and jungle training. It then bears comparison with similar American Army and Australian units. US Army units on New Georgia were decimated attacking Japanese fortifications. They were mainly National Guard units, the equivalent of territorials, who had received similar basic training to that of 3NZ Division. Australian units committed to taking Gona in Papua New Guinea also incurred significant casualties attacking dug-in Japanese defenders. It is likely that if 3NZ Division had been committed to similar operations it also would have become burned out.

One significant aspect of 3NZ Division was that it trained with and carried out complex amphibious operations alongside USN personnel. The New Zealanders were able to adapt USN amphibious warfare doctrine successfully. Indeed the US Navy considered

²¹⁰ Gamble, pp.45-47.

Operation Squarepeg a model of its type.²¹¹ The Australians undertook a number of such operations. The first was an amphibious assault on Lae by 9th Australian Division in September 1943. Real command difficulties emerged with the seizure of Finschhafen as the Australians and Americans quarrelled over movement of troops to reinforce the area and it became obvious that Blamey had no authority over MacArthur's naval commander Admiral Barbey. Relationships deteriorated further as MacArthur moved his Headquarters to Leyte and seemed reluctant to use Australian troops. The Australians captured Tarakan in May and Balikpapan in July 1945, operations marked by further friction with MacArthur.²¹²

The operation of the Canadian Thirteenth Infantry Brigade, known as 'Greenlight Force' provides another comparison. Some 3,500 Canadian and 30,000 American soldiers invaded the Aleutian Island of Kiska in August 1943, under American command. They discovered the Japanese had left. Canadian participation was viewed as 'a ridiculous anti-climax'²¹³ and the Canadian Prime Minister considered 'that expedition should never have taken place'.²¹⁴ Canadian involvement was marked by political considerations and vacillations, the rapid gathering of troops, morale problems, doubt as to the combat-worthiness of the troops and friction with the Americans. The Canadians were especially sensitive to casualties following the debacles at Hong Kong in 1941, and Dieppe in 1942. This led the Canadian Prime Minister to consider scrapping Canadian involvement, but the possible harm to US-Canadian relations outweighed this. Ottawa reserved 'the right to withdraw all or part of Greenlight Force at any point during the campaign'.²¹⁵

²¹¹ Wilkinson commented 'the performance of the ground forces, both military and engineering was characterised by the record for efficiency hitherto established by the 3rd New Zealand Division. All landing and combat operations were conducted in an aggressive and skillful manner'. Wilkinson Report p.12.

²¹² David Horner, 'The Military Strategy and Command Aspects of the Australian Army's Amphibious Operations in the South West Pacific Area', in Lt. Col. Glenn Wahlert (ed.), Australian Army Amphibious Operations in the South West Pacific: 1942-45, Sydney: Southwood Press, 1995, pp.35-39.

²¹³ C. P. Stacey, Official History of the Canadian Army in the Second World War: The Army in Canada, Britain and the Pacific, Ottawa: Government Printer, 1955, pp.500-505.

²¹⁴ National Archives of Canada, WLM King Papers, Diaries MG 26, J13 Entry 26 October 1943.

²¹⁵ Gallen Roger Perras, "'When We Got There, the Cupboard Was Bare.'" Canada's Greenlight Force and the Recapture of Kiska, 1943'. Address given at War Veterans' Day Conference and Symposium, Anchorage, Alaska, November 7-13, 1993, p.25, Author's Collection.

A very crude measure of military effectiveness is the casualties 3NZ Division incurred in relation to the victories achieved. On Vella Lavella units of 14 Brigade destroyed or pushed off the Japanese for minimal casualties. Likewise Goodtime was carried out with low casualties. The third amphibious operation, Squarepeg, was the cheapest victory of all.

In carrying out its battlefield missions 3NZ Division was remarkably successful for a unit which had not experienced combat prior to 1943. Vella Lavella was cleared of Japanese. Goodtime was uniformly successful – the Treasury Islands were rapidly secured. Radar, aerial and naval facilities were swiftly established. Likewise the Green Islands were quickly cleared of Japanese. Another measure of military effectiveness is the success of logistics. Even in an area as remote as Vella Lavella, the frontline units received their supplies of rations and ammunition. The supply line stretched back to New Zealand and although most shipping was American, the Divisional logistical units attended to processing and distribution.

A feature of the Division's operations is the proclivity of its soldiers towards unconventional operations, generally of an intelligence gathering nature. Soldiers like Sgt W.A. Cowan were able to use their skills to good effect.

Another notable feature of the Division's combat operations is their almost autonomous nature. The New Zealanders had their own weapons (which were generally incompatible with American weapons), and their own distinct command structures and training. It is arguable that if the Division had been deployed alongside American units on, for example, Bougainville, its distinct needs would have severely strained the American logistical system.

The relatively small size of 3NZ Division obscures its significant contribution. When 14 Brigade was deployed to Vella Lavella, it afforded a respite for the three American divisions that had been engaged in the gruelling New Georgia campaign. By garrisoning Vella Lavella 14 Brigade triggered the withdrawal of Japanese forces from by-passed Kolombangara and completed the New Georgia campaign. During the planning for the invasion of Bougainville there was a shortage of American troops in theatre, particularly those with amphibious capabilities. 8 Brigade conducted a useful

diversionary operation and facilitated the establishment of radar installations. The latter were of particular value in Operation Cherryblossom.

Combat is the ultimate audit of a military unit's training, motivation, weaponry and leadership. 3NZ Division passed that audit. It had trained intensively in amphibious and jungle warfare, and was well equipped and led. If it had survived into 1945 it is likely that it would have been a key element in New Zealand's contribution to the Commonwealth Corps for the invasion of Japan. The experience in amphibious operations with the Americans would have been invaluable.

CHAPTER 5: FIGHTING WITH THE YANKS

Exasperated by coalition¹ warfare in World War II, Winston Churchill quipped that ‘There is only one thing worse than fighting with allies - and that is fighting without them’.² Churchill recognised that allies inevitably brought problems as well as benefits.³ That thought would have resonated in both Washington and Wellington as they pursued the common objective of ejecting the Japanese from the Solomon Islands. At times the exasperation extended down to the commanders in theatre and even to ordinary servicemen. However, the relationship was generally cooperative and friendly, particularly in comparison with that between the Australians and the Americans nearby.

This chapter examines the coalition between the United States and New Zealand in the South Pacific as it affected 3 Division. It looks at the strategic and diplomatic sphere, the relationship between General Barrowclough and American commanders, problems of communication and logistics, and interactions between the troops.

Alliances and coalitions differ.⁴ Alliances are generally formed during peacetime in response to a perceived common threat with the intention of providing long-term collective security. Structures are created for military and political liaison and trust and co-operation build up over a long time. Coalitions tend to be short-term responses to a common threat. Structures tend to be ad hoc and contributions based on short-term considerations.

¹ ‘An ad hoc arrangement between two or more nations for a common action’. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Dictionary of Military Terms, London: Greenhill Books, 1999, p.73.

² Peter G. Tsouras, (ed.), The Greenhill Dictionary of Military Quotations, London: Greenhill Books 2000, p.34. Field Marshall Lord Alanbrooke, War Diaries 1939-45, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001, p.680, Entry 1 April 1945.

³ Another person who had a dubious view of allies was General Mark Clark, US Army Commander, 5th Army, Italy who felt that New Zealand troops were difficult to handle and ‘have always been given special considerations which we would not give to our own troops.’ He commented ‘And thus I was about to agree with Napoleon’s conclusion that it is better to fight allies than be one of them’. Matthew Parker, Monte Cassino, London: Headline Book Publishing, 2003, p.165.

⁴ J.P. Riley, Napoleon and the World War of 1813 - Lessons in Coalition Warfighting, London: Frank Cass, 2000, pp.3-5). Also Wayne A. Silkett, ‘Alliance and Coalition Warfare’ in Parameters, Summer 1993, pp.74-85. ‘From a military standpoint, a coalition is an informal agreement for common action between two or more nations. An alliance ... is a more formal arrangement for broad, long term objectives.’, p.74.

The New Zealand-American relationship was a coalition, with the Americans by far the dominant partner. Prior to 1941 Wellington had no formal diplomatic relationship with Washington and even thereafter the Americans declined to consult meaningfully on the conduct of the Pacific War. For its part, Wellington envisaged a post-war return to its place within British defence schemes. For both the relationship was envisaged as short-term. To be most effective, warfighting coalitions need common doctrine, agreement on strategy, a common planning process, unity of command, training with an emphasis on commonalities, integrated command, control and communications and logistics management.⁵ More often than not, these were lacking in the American-New Zealand relationship in World War II. Goodwill on the part of both commanders and soldiers was essential for the success of 'combined operations'.⁶

The United States had seldom fought in a coalition and there tended to be discordance when it did. Franco-American operations during the American War of Independence were unsuccessful except at Yorktown.⁷ World War I⁸ saw intense disputes with Anglo-French commanders on the use of the AEF⁹ and intervention in Russia was costly and bitter.¹⁰ The American desire to fight alone, or at least to dominate any coalition, arose from that history. When involved in coalition warfare, they sought to maintain the national integrity and command of their units.¹¹

The early attempt at inter-allied co-operation in the Pacific in ABDACOM (American British Dutch Australian Command) confirmed American discomfort. This was epitomised by the Battle of the Java Sea, 27-28 February 1942, where differences of

⁵ Robert W. Riscassi, 'Principles For Coalition Warfare' in Joint Forces Quarterly, Summer 1993, pp.58-71.

⁶ Military operations involving two or more forces or agencies of two or more allies. Office of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Department of Defence, Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, London: Greenhill Books, 1999, p.79.

⁷ Geoffrey Perret, A Country Made by War, New York: Random House, 1989, p.69. See also Harlow Giles Unger, The French War Against America : How a Trusted Ally Betrayed Washington and the Founding Fathers, New York: Wiley, 2005.

⁸ Woodrow Wilson stated that America would enter the war not as one of the Allies, but rather as an 'associate power'. Joseph E. Persico, 11th Month, 11th Day, 11th Hour, London: Hutchinson, 2004, p.137.

⁹ Paul F. Braim, The Test of Battle - The American Expeditionary Forces in the Meuse-Argonne Campaign, Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Books, 1998, pp.152-166.

¹⁰ Maurice Matloff, American Military History Vol. 2, 1902-1996, Conshohocken, PA: Combined Books, 1996, p.65. Also, Robert L. Willett, Russian Sideshow : America's Undeclared War in Russia 1918-1920, London: Brassey's, 2005.

¹¹ David F. Trask, The AEF and Coalition Warmaking 1917-18, Lawrence: University of Kansas, 1993, pp.11, 74-75

doctrine, language, wireless systems and national defence interests contributed to the virtual destruction of the Asiatic Fleet.¹²

The New Zealand experience of coalition warfare in the Boer War and Great War was characterised by three features. Firstly, New Zealand contingents fought under British Imperial command, with common values, language and military culture. They were supplied with British weapons and equipment and configured along British lines. Secondly, the deployments were relatively small, up to divisional level. Thirdly, they suffered considerable casualties during the First World War, which impacted heavily on the small population.¹³ Disillusionment with the military and an overall suspicion of military men set in, particularly amongst those in socialist movements.

However welcome the American involvement, New Zealand's preference would have been to fight alongside British forces. Both American and New Zealand soldiers were therefore in a sense uneasy, coincidental allies.¹⁴ The coalition came into being suddenly, and for the New Zealanders it was of major importance whereas for the Americans it was a small element in their strategy,¹⁵ which involved a primary relationship with the British.¹⁶

¹² Correlli Barnett, Engage the Enemy More Closely, New York: WW Norton & Co, 1991, pp.423-426. See also F.C. Van Oosten, The Battle of the Java Sea, London: Ian Allen 1976, pp.70-75.

¹³ Glyn Harper, Dark Journey, Auckland: Harper Collins, 2007, p.134, observes that of a population of approximately one million, New Zealand suffered 17,000 killed and 41,000 wounded.

¹⁴ See also Ian C. McGibbon, Blue-Water Rationale – The Naval Defence of New Zealand 1914-42, Wellington: Government Printer, 1981, p.316. 'New Zealand continued to oppose the United States designs in the region, persisting in its attitude even after the outbreak of war in September'.

¹⁵ Prior to the Pacific War, New Zealand did not feature in American war plans. Indeed, there was tension between Washington and Wellington over American attempts to acquire Pacific islands as air links. M.P. Lissington, New Zealand and the United States 1840-1944, Wellington: Government Printer 1972, p.19. See also Archives NZ AD12/28/11. A complaint was made by the Chief of NZ Air Staff that American surveyors were inspecting possible landing sites in Samoa and had undertaken construction work on Christmas Island completely without any prior consultation or permission by Wellington. PMNZ to Rangi, Washington, 7 November 1941.

¹⁶ Christopher Thorne Allies of a Kind – The United States, Britain and the War Against Japan 1941-1945 London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978, p.702. The Anglo-American relationship was also fraught with tensions as the Americans became increasingly dominant from 1942 onwards and disagreements emerged over grand strategy. The impotence of the Pacific War Council is symptomatic of not only Australasian but also British weakness. For the American interface between military strength and strategy see Mark A. Stoler, Allies and Adversaries – The Joint Chiefs of Staff, The Grand Alliance and Us Strategy in World War II, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000. 'The war with Japan exposed differences between London and Washington more profound than any which afflicted policy in Europe... It is hard to overstate the mutual suspicion and indeed antagonism which prevailed between the Western Allies in Asia in 1944-45'. Max Hastings, Nemesis, London: Harper Collins, 2007, pp.62-63. Also Thorne, pp.536-538. Seen against the background of friction between London and Washington the Wellington and Washington relationship was positively benign.

In 1939 New Zealand faced the threat of raiders. The emphasis was therefore on seaborne defence and New Zealand's responsibility was defined by the New Zealand Naval Station. After Japan entered the war, the main focus for the British Commonwealth was on defending Singapore. With the loss of Singapore and the Dutch East Indies, the sole significant Allied naval power in the Pacific was the US Navy (USN). The situation cried out for a single theatre commander, but this prospect was derailed by rivalry within the American military. The USN attempted to deny fleet assets to General MacArthur, partly because they doubted his ability to use air and naval power effectively.¹⁷ Nor was the US Army enthusiastic about accepting the authority of Admiral Nimitz, appointed Commander of the US Pacific Fleet in the wake of Pearl Harbor.

Australia and New Zealand attempted to get a unified command. Their respective Chiefs of Staff met in Melbourne between 26 February to 1 March 1942, to develop joint defence plans, and indicated to General George C. Marshall, the Head of the US Army, that they favoured the appointment of an American general to command an area comprising Australia, New Zealand, Timor, Amboyna and New Guinea. This commander would be responsible to both the American and British Chiefs of Staff.¹⁸

King disagreed. He envisaged Australia and New Zealand in separate theatres:

New Zealand, he insisted, was a link in the line of communications and an integral part of the system of island bases stretching east and north to Hawaii. The defence of this line, he then declared, was essentially a naval problem and intimately associated with the operations of the Pacific Fleet. Australia and its approaches through the Netherlands Indies and New Guinea formed a separate strategic entity and should, King asserted, be placed under another command.¹⁹

On the other hand, the US Army argued that New Zealand should be included in the Australian area, along with New Caledonia, Fiji and New Guinea. The US Joint Chiefs

¹⁷ A critical assessment of MacArthur's role in the debacle in the Philippines bears out this proposition. William Bartsch, December 8, 1941 - MacArthur's Pearl Harbor. College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2003.

¹⁸ Louis Morton, Strategy and Command - the First Two Years, Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1971, p.245.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.245.

of Staff (JCOS) eventually decreed a split between a South-West Pacific Area encompassing Australia, and a South Pacific Area encompassing New Zealand.

This decision created two command areas with different commanders and different missions. The South West Pacific was commanded by MacArthur and encompassed Australia, New Guinea, the Solomons (initially), most of the Dutch East Indies and the Philippines. Much of this area was under Japanese control. MacArthur's role was essentially defensive, although he soon exploited ambiguities in his orders to initiate offensive actions aimed at re-taking the Philippines. Nimitz's mission was clearly offensive, to 'prepare for the execution of major amphibious offensives against positions held by Japan, the initial offensives to be launched from the South Pacific Area and the South West Pacific Area'.²⁰ His command was broken into three areas - Central Pacific, North Pacific and South Pacific. He commanded the first two areas directly, but the third was under a USN Officer responsible to him.²¹ The American commanders established these arrangements themselves. While both officially reported to the JCOS, effectively MacArthur reported to Marshall as Head of the US Army and Nimitz reported to King as Head of the US Navy.

Most of the troops in the South West Pacific were Australian, but MacArthur was specifically prevented from commanding them directly. He had to act through an Australian commander, which he found a major discomfort. Nimitz, however, was under no such constraints as the forces under his command were essentially American.²² King reiterated his view that 'The defence of Australia is primarily a land/air problem for which the best possible naval support is a fleet free to manoeuvre without restrictions imposed by the local situation' while New Zealand constituted a naval defence problem which had 'no relation to the defence of Australia.'²³

Forced to accept this, Wellington continued to express its concerns about whether the American commanders would move New Zealand forces outside its respective

²⁰ Morton, p.251.

²¹ Morton, p.249.

²² Morton, p.250

²³ Ibid., p.252.

territories without consultation.²⁴ King replied that the JCOS were controlled by the President and Allied governments had diplomatic access to him. Each country could also 'refuse the use of its forces for any project which it considers inadvisable'.²⁵ It is against that background that Barrowclough's Charter, the requirement that New Zealand senior commanders provide certificates of combat worthiness and chances of success of operations, should be seen. King had acknowledged that Wellington could refuse to commit its troops to military operations. The corollary was that the commander of the national contingent had to have access to Wellington to warn it of any 'inadvisable project'.

It was evident that the Americans would impose their will on their junior partner when the brigades on Fiji were returned to New Zealand because it suited the Americans. Similarly, Ghormley did not confide in Fraser regarding Operation Watchtower, and he tried to avoid engaging with Wellington generally. The American command structure flowed from the JCOS in Washington²⁶ through Nimitz and Ghormley. Wellington had little influence on American strategic or operational decision making²⁷ and there was no formal mechanism for co-ordinating New Zealand/American actions. The Pacific War Council had no effect on American military decision making,²⁸ particularly when it and Nash were relocated to London, and there was never any intention on the part of Roosevelt that it would.²⁹

New Zealand was concerned at the lack of contact. 'It was even felt that our US allies disregarded us in many ways, and even though this apparent disregard was unconscious, it was considered dangerous, as it might affect Peace Table matters and New Zealand's

²⁴ Archives NZ, Air 1, 130/4/, King to Nash, 14 April 1942.

²⁵ Morton, p.252.

²⁶ The Joint Chiefs of Staff played an increasingly important role in shaping American foreign policy. See Mark A. Stoler, Allies and Adversaries, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000.

²⁷ Arguably this may have flowed from an American desire 'to avoid embarrassing Britain in regard to Australia and New Zealand and to ensure that the vital American presence in those Dominions did not jeopardise the very existence of Commonwealth ties'. Thorne, p.702.

²⁸ Keith Sinclair, Walter Nash, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1976. Sinclair considers the Pacific War Council had considerable value as window dressing giving the impression of participation in decision making, p.219.

²⁹ Ronald Spector, Eagle Against The Sun, New York: Penguin Books, 1984, p.143. The JCOS felt the Council allowed the allies 'to let off steam, but not such as would in any way affect the United States in its military decisions'.

after war planning.’³⁰ The War Cabinet pressed for closer liaison, but was aware that ‘US officers had objections to Ministers or civilians, or to anything savouring of the political or diplomatic.’³¹ A New Zealand Army Liaison Officer was therefore appointed to COMSOPAC, with a brief to include all three services. Halsey agreed to this after a visit from J.G. Coates. The appointee, Colonel Salmon, arrived at Noumea on 14 April 1943. His duties ranged from co-ordination of requests through to gaining ‘information of the Commander’s plans so that New Zealand could formulate her own military and supply policies’. Salmon had to keep the Prime Minister advised, act as a channel for communication and be alert to ‘all matters which might affect New Zealand in its Pacific relations or its war plans, or its planning for after the war’.³² Requests from Barrowclough for the loan of a Senior Staff Officer were declined because the officer proposed was too busy.³³

Despite the power his charter gave him to appeal to Wellington, Barrowclough was reluctant to refuse to co-operate with American plans. Despite his considerable anxiety about the adequacy of the force to land at Soanotalu during Operation Goodtime, he concluded ‘The immediate responsibility for this operation, however, rests with FMAC³⁴ and not with me. I can scarcely, with reason, refuse to carry out the operation, in the way they have laid down and I must hope that they will be able to give adequate naval support in the event of a serious attempt to counter-attack against the Island.’³⁵ Barrowclough could not have refused the American request for troops without endangering their broader plans for Bougainville. Moreover, he wanted his Division involved in combat and a refusal could prevent a further opportunity arising.

Barrowclough recalled that the only time when he came close to using the charter was on New Caledonia when General Alexander Patch, US Army, requested that the Division construct a road in the Central Highlands. Barrowclough felt he could spare neither the men nor the equipment and that satisfactory roads already existed. He

³⁰ Archives NZ, Air 1, 130/8/7 NZ Chiefs of Staff Papers, Review of Experiences, Colonel Salmon.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Archives NZ WAI, 9, S9 Barrowclough sought the loan of an American Colonel to discuss amphibious operations but instead was provided with manuals. Rear Admiral R.K. Turner to Barrowclough, 16 May 1943; Barrowclough to Turner, 10 May 1943

³⁴ First Marine Amphibious Corps, often referred to as 'One Mac'.

³⁵ War Diary GOC 3NZ Division, 21 October 1943.

persuaded Patch but noted ‘if he had not I might have been forced to remind him of certain provisions in my charter.’³⁶

Barrowclough operated comfortably within the American command structure, meticulously observing the chain of command.³⁷ He strove hard to avoid friction, often by dealing with matters informally. For example, problems with loading LSTs for Squarepeg led him to write to Rear Admiral Wilkinson. However, he added that ‘I am not disposed to enter any formal or official complaint as I am sure the difficulties have arisen purely from a misapprehension or from a well-meaning but mistaken zeal.’³⁸ Similarly, in dealing with claims that 3NZ Division had hoarded supplies, Barrowclough wrote to Major General Breene, denying the allegation in ‘an entirely personal and unofficial note’.³⁹

Puttick was also conscious of possible American sensitivity. He proposed that Fijian soldiers should make up the Division’s missing brigade. This made sense considering the close relationship between the FDF and the Division, which supplied most of its officers. Halsey rejected the idea twice. Consequently Puttick did not want ‘to risk irritating Halsey by raising a third time a matter which he has already given a decision on.’ He felt that Halsey ‘would suspect some ulterior notice such as my ultimate intention to endeavour to secure the whole brigade or to deprive US command of Solomons battalion’.⁴⁰ In seeking American permission to reduce the New Zealand garrison on Tonga in 1943, Puttick thought that the strategic position justified this but conceded it was not his place to come to such conclusions and concluded ‘I would be glad to have your instructions on the matter.’⁴¹

Barrowclough appears to have got on well with Americans.⁴² After assuming command on Vella Lavella, he found his own staff numbers inadequate and temporarily retained

³⁶ J.T. Henderson, Interview with H.E. Barrowclough, November 1969, p.12, Unpublished.

³⁷ This contrasted with the actions of the Commander of the RNZAF Air Marshall Goddard who aroused Halsey’s ire by dealing with Admiral J.S. McCain rather than through Admiral Fitch and Admiral Halsey. Library of Congress Manuscript MS13, Halsey Box 15, Halsey to McCain, 28 April 1943.

³⁸ Archives NZ, WAI, 9, S9, Barrowclough to Wilkinson, 21 February 1944.

³⁹ Archives NZ, WAI, 9, S9, Barrowclough to Breene, 2 January 1944.

⁴⁰ Archives NZ, AD12, Box 21, Secret Cables - E. Puttick Army HQ to NZLO London, 6 July 1943.

⁴¹ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, Unnumbered Files, Box 21, Puttick to COMSOPAC, 23 October 1943.

⁴² There were exceptions. On Stirling Island in 1943, Barrowclough ordered a African-American truck driver to remove his vehicle from the sea only to be told ‘I don’t give a godamn what you Kiwis want, I was told to wash my truck in the sea and I am going to do it.’ No doubt he had no idea of who was addressing him. Campbell Davie interview 2006.

American staff.⁴³ He probably had contact with American officers in 1918 as commander 1st Battalion, Rifle Brigade, when the New Zealand Division 'hosted detachments of Americans to give the latter experience prior to Americans being employed'.⁴⁴ American naval commanders appeared to respect Barrowclough whereas for the Australians Blamey did not cut the type of dash to impress MacArthur. Barrowclough may well have been able to influence American use of his Division.⁴⁵ He was able to persuade COMSOPAC to request it be deployed into the Forward Area rather than undertaking garrison duty. Similarly, when the Americans were contemplating using it in the New Georgia campaign, Barrowclough urged Admiral Wilkinson to 'give us a task which would give us an opportunity of undertaking real offensive action. I referred to the fact that General Harmon had congratulated us on the records we had established in amphibious operations'. Wilkinson promised to discuss this with COMSOPAC.⁴⁶

Latterly Rear Admiral Robert B. Carney USN, Chief of Staff, COMSOPAC wrote to Barrowclough declaring 'how completely satisfactory our relations have universally been with the New Zealanders in general. Your own handling of the tasks assigned to the 3rd Division have always been in such perfect consonance with the South Pacific credo that they could not help but win the respect and admiration of all our people.'⁴⁷ Barrowclough replied that Carney's compliments 'may embolden me at the appropriate moment - to seek your and Admiral Halsey's intervention to get me and my Division back with our old American friends. Strictly between ourselves and entirely "off the record", I am not anxious to serve with the Australian Army to whom we would inevitably be assigned if we were transferred to General MacArthur's command'.⁴⁸ New Zealand co-operation was recognised by Admiral Nimitz when he noted in private correspondence 'New Zealand has made, is making, and will continue to make a very vital effort to participate in the South Pacific War. Their willingness to participate has

⁴³ Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15/1 Pt. 4, Barrowclough to Army HQ, 20 September 1943.

⁴⁴ Steve Taylor, 'Major General The Right Honourable Sir Harold Eric Barrowclough', 2004 New Zealand Armed Forces Law Review, Wellington, p.20.

⁴⁵ Alister McIntosh certainly suspected that Barrowclough had persuaded the Americans to commit 3NZ Division to combat operations. Ian McGibbon (ed.), Undiplomatic Dialogue – Letters between Carl Berendsen and Alistair McIntosh 1943-1952, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1994, pp.26-27.

⁴⁶ War Diary GOC 3NZ Div., 4 September 1943.

⁴⁷ Archives NZ, WAI, 9, S9, Carney to Barrowclough, 29 May 1944.

⁴⁸ Archives NZ, WAI, 9, S9, Barrowclough to Carney, 29 May 1944.

won for them a very friendly feeling in Washington with our high military and naval authorities.’⁴⁹

Whereas MacArthur and Eichelberger held a low opinion of the Australian Army⁵⁰ in general and the Australian militia in particular, USN commanders such as Halsey⁵¹ and Wilkinson were fulsome in their praise of New Zealand troops. Nevertheless, in earlier arguing for a combat role for 3NZ Division, Barrowclough ‘pointed out that the Americans in their cups were apt to point out that they were defending New Zealand ‘with the result that ears were thickened and eyes blackened, and a little blood was apt to run.’⁵² Similarly, the NZ Liaison Officer at COMSOPAC found that the Americans had prejudices about the British and New Zealanders and that there was ‘a complete unawareness of part (if any) and what extent New Zealand is playing in the war in the Pacific’. Some Americans thought that New Zealand was putting all its energy into the Middle East and leaving America to fight New Zealand’s battle in the Pacific.⁵³ The Americans also had their frustrations. Halsey complained about ‘the more or less “jackass” command set-up we have to go through when dealing with the New Zealand Government.’⁵⁴ They perceived a ‘lack of co-ordination’ by government departments, ‘duck shoving’ and difficulty in ascertaining responsibility.⁵⁵

The priority of keeping 3 Division’s units together was evident in Barrowclough’s Charter, but the possibility of some dispersal among American units was contemplated. At a meeting with Halsey and Harmon in Noumea in late 1942, Coates, Berendsen, Goddard and Puttick agreed that whilst New Zealand units should not be unduly dispersed, ‘NZ readily agreed that NZ units might be required to temporarily replace US

⁴⁹ Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, MS16, Halsey Box 6, Nimitz to Halsey, 3 April 1943.

⁵⁰ The feeling was reciprocated. ‘Naturally, the Australians derided the Americans as amateurs and advertised themselves fresh from fighting Rommel, as the real soldiers around here’. Geoffrey Perret, There's A War To Be Won, New York: Random House, 1991, p.232. The fact that 3NZ Division was almost completely inexperienced in combat operations prevented such a feeling from arising.

⁵¹ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, S14 Operations. Halsey described Barrowclough’s role in Squarepeg in glowing terms. Halsey to CINC US Fleet, 29 April 1944. See also Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 121/1/1/8 Griswold, 27 September 1943, where Halsey commented ‘Elements of 3NZ Division in Paraso Mundi Mundi area are excellent’.

⁵² McGibbon (ed.), Dialogue, p.30.

⁵³ Archives NZ, Air 1, 130/8/7 COS Papers, 22 September 1943.

⁵⁴ Halsey was referring specifically to air matters but the sentiment was no doubt broader. Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Halsey to Nimitz, 11 June 1943.

⁵⁵ Archives NZ Air 1, 130/817 Chiefs of Staff Papers Memo, 22 September 1943, p.5.

units ... to permit concentration of US formations for offensive action'.⁵⁶ The Americans asked for New Zealand to supply a full-strength division for New Caledonia, take over the defence of Tonga and hold Norfolk Island.⁵⁷ This resulted in New Zealand units briefly coming under American command in Tonga. Puttick did object to the dispersal and sought to have T Force and N Force reunited with their parent formation. On New Caledonia 3NZ Division retained its integrity and was generally (except for some detached AA and coastal artillery units) commanded by its own officers.

Although Barrowclough's relations with the Americans were generally good, he did face marginalisation by American planners, who tended to treat 3NZ Division as a unit to be deployed at their pleasure and even broken up for specific combat operations. In doing so they tended to deal with the operational commanders such as Row rather than Barrowclough. In respect of Vella Lavella Barrowclough received unofficially a copy of a message instructing General Griswold, the US Army Commander in New Georgia, to arrange for 3NZ Division to take over from three American divisions. Barrowclough feared his forces would be split between Vella Lavella and New Georgia and would face imminent danger from Japanese troops. When visited by Rear Admiral Wilkinson, Admiral Ford and Major General Barrett⁵⁸ on 4 September 1943, he did not raise the issue with them, but rather referred obliquely to the dangers of dispersed garrisons and expressed the hope that in view of the Division's capabilities it would be employed amphibiously.⁵⁹

Barrowclough lamented that

on arrival at my H.Q. I found a series of most conflicting arrangements being made by the various H.Q. of the American forces situated here. They were all planning our move without reference to me and without my having yet received anything more than a copy of a cable addressed to General Griswold instructing him to prepare a plan for the move forward of my Division. General Barrett and

⁵⁶ Archives NZ, AD12, Box 21 Secret Cables, E. Puttick, Puttick to Park, 4 December 1942.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Gillespie notes that Barrowclough '...tactfully ended their tendency to plan forward moves without consulting him about his own formations', Gillespie p.125. However, the phenomenon was to be soon repeated in respect of Goodtime.

⁵⁹ War Diary, GOC 3NZ Division, 4 September 1943, pp.14-15.

Admiral Wilkinson were both in Noumea as was Colonel Linscott, their G.3, Army. There was no-one to whom I could refer but I was informed that Colonel Linscott will be returning later this afternoon.

He further commented

The US set up in this theatre with its multiplicity of headquarters and services is extremely complicated and one had difficulty getting definite instructions on any particular point. At the moment this Division is attached to XIV Corps but the instructions seem to be coming from General Harmon, Admiral Wilkinson and General Barrett and our actual move will probably be directed by the Commander of Task Force 31 and if past experience is to be repeated he will probably prepare the plan without any reference to me. His H.Q. is in Noumea and he has little idea of the difference in our organisation from that of an American Division.⁶⁰

Barrowclough attended a conference on 10 September at 'Crocodile H.Q.' with Rear Admiral Wilkinson, Admiral Ford and General Barrett, where he was told that the Division's brigades would be split, with 8 Brigade probably deployed in a 'largely defensive occupation of an Island Base'.⁶¹ Yet a month later it was committed to an offensive operation – Operation Goodtime.

Barrowclough actually became one of the few non-Americans to command American troops⁶² when he took control of Allied forces on Vella Lavella,⁶³ and the land forces in Operation Goodtime and Operation Squarepeg.⁶⁴ In contrast, American Army

⁶⁰ War Diary GOC 3NZ Division, 9 September 1943. Barrowclough commented to Puttick 'that the American system of command is extremely complicated and very unsatisfactory'. He went on to say 'This however is the way in which they do things here and they are not prepared to alter it at this late stage though I gather they themselves find the system cumbersome and unwieldy. Archives NZ, Puttick Papers, Barrowclough to Puttick, 11 October 1943.

⁶¹ Ibid 10 September 1943, p17.

⁶² Instances are rare: Montgomery briefly in the Battle of the Bulge; Wavell briefly in 1942 in ABDACOM, Alexander in Sicily and Italy. One other person was Puttick – he had American troops under his operational command whilst they were in New Zealand in 1942. Archives NZ, AD12, Box 21, Secret Cables. E Puttick to Freyberg 19 June 1942.

⁶³ Barrowclough had over 17,000 troops under his command. Archives NZ WAI, 1, DAZ 121/1/1/10 Appendix XX.

⁶⁴ On the Green Islands Barrowclough was the commander of a future American President - Richard M. Nixon who was involved with SCAT. Duane Hove, American Warriors - Five American Presidents in the Pacific Theater of World War II, Shippensburg, Pennsylvania: Burd Street Press, 2003.

commanders resisted having their troops commanded by Australians.⁶⁵ MacArthur resorted to creating 'Task Forces' to avoid troops being placed under Blamey's command. Lt. General Robert C. Richardson, a US Commander, feared that American troops would be 'placed under a non-professional Australian drunk', meaning Blamey.⁶⁶

Barrowclough appears to have adopted a low-key, informal approach in dealing with Americans under his command. On the Green Islands he dealt with allegations of improper behaviour from several junior officers against Captain Rochester, USN. Barrowclough suggested that the lodging of an official complaint be withheld in the meantime. He then indicated to Wilkinson that Rochester 'has probably lost some prestige with his own unit and you may think it advisable to recall him earlier than might otherwise have been the case.' Rochester was recalled and matters resolved informally.⁶⁷

A fire at the PT Boat base on Vella Lavella on 14 December 1943 resulted in two deaths, and tested Barrowclough's handling of inter-allied relations because the personnel involved were American. He constituted a Court of Inquiry, appointing a legally qualified New Zealand officer as President, assisted by US Navy and US Marine Corps officers. Barrowclough reported to the Commanding General, Forward Area that the base commander could have prevented the accident, but drew back from a finding of negligence, indicating that no further action should be taken.⁶⁸

Barrowclough could, where appropriate, be stern with American troops under his command. On the Green Islands in 1944 he faced the problem of maintaining field hygiene, an absolute necessity in the tropics. An area had been designated for disposal of rubbish but rubbish was nonetheless building up and creating a hazard. Barrowclough outlined the problem to his senior commanders. He then pointed to an

Barrowclough noted that 'I was under overall US operational control, but at times I also had Americans under my command. At Green Island I commanded more Americans (including one Richard Nixon) than New Zealanders.' J.T. Henderson, Barrowclough Interview, p.12.

⁶⁵ Lt. General Richardson complained that "No American commander should be placed in the position of being dependent on foreigners." Horner, High Command, p.219.

⁶⁶ D.M. Horner, High Command – Australia and Allied Strategy 1939-1945, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1982, p.208.

⁶⁷ Archives NZ, WAI, 9, S9 Barrowclough to Wilkinson, 24 February 1944.

⁶⁸ Archives NZ, WAI, 9, S9, Barrowclough to Commanding General, Forward Area, 27 December 1943.

American officer and asked what orders he would give to his men. The American replied 'I guess General, I will tell them to get it out of sight'. Barrowclough coolly responded that if one of his own officers had said that he would cease to be an officer.⁶⁹

Similarly, Brigadier Row in the planning of Goodtime had to make clear to American officers that they were subject to his commands. A group of American officers dissatisfied with their allocation of shipping space for Goodtime arrived at Row's HQ wanting 'to see the General'. They explained to Row that they wanted to take more equipment. Row curtly dismissed them saying 'Gentlemen, you have your orders - carry them out'.⁷⁰

Barrowclough's commands involved limited numbers of American troops, mainly Seabees and garrison personnel, and there would have been few American casualties in the event of a blunder. Moreover, he had no control over American aerial and naval operations. He had limited independence and he understood this, even referring American fitness reports back to American officers for completion.⁷¹ On Vella Lavella, he ordered part of an American Parachute Regiment to occupy defensive positions on the north coast though they were not meant for garrison duty. When General Vandegrift protested, Barrowclough readily agreed to their being moved with the reservation that in an invasion he might order them back.⁷²

Conversely there was some desire on the part of COMSOPAC to have a say in the Division's internal administration. This was manifested by Halsey's concerns regarding its under-strength nature, expressed bluntly to Prime Minister Fraser.⁷³ A second instance occurred when Barrowclough decided to replace Brigadier Row after Operation Goodtime. This led to a conversation between Halsey's Chief of Staff, Admiral Carney, and Colonel C.W. Salmon, the New Zealand representative at SOPAC H.Q., who relayed it to Puttick:

⁶⁹ David Williams, Interview 7 July 2006

⁷⁰ David Williams Interview 7 July 2006.

⁷¹ Whilst on The Green Islands Barrowclough was the General Officer Commanding. He was asked by Captain A.E.R. Wilkinson to complete his fitness report. Barrowclough felt that this would have been 'presumptuous on my part to attempt to fill in the Report of Fitness form in the same way as it might be filled in by a United States Army or Marine Officer', Archives NZ, WAI 9, S9 Barrowclough to COMSOPAC, 4 May 1944.

⁷² Archives NZ, WAI, 9, S9, Barrowclough to C.O.1MAC CORPS Troops Vella, 25 October 43.

⁷³ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/15 Halsey to Fraser, 21 August 1943.

The Admiral (Halsey) and Admiral Carney would like to be informed of any changes of command personnel before such changes are made. This request has come because of a recent change made by 3 Div. of Brigade Commander (Brigadier Row to Brigadier Goss). Admiral Carney put it that he had learned this accidentally from one of his officers, and although in no sense questioning the change of appointment or the reasons for it (he looks upon this as NZ's own domestic matter) that he would have liked to have heard of it officially before it was made just in case they had any viewpoints to express; and he would appreciate it if the NZ Chiefs of Staff would advise COMSOPAC in the future.

Salmon considered that this principle would also apply to any command change for forces deployed outside New Zealand, including RNZAF and Royal New Zealand Navy.⁷⁴ There was certainly an implication that American commanders should have a say in the promotion or demotion of New Zealand commanders. Fortunately the issue was not pressed.

The willingness of the soldiers of 3NZ Division to work alongside the Americans is exemplified by the way they embraced American military doctrines and experience. Officers and NCO's were sent to an American Combat Intelligence Course on Guadalcanal.⁷⁵ American close air support techniques were studied and a course in air support control was held at Tontouta.⁷⁶ Officers were despatched to the United States to learn about amphibious warfare⁷⁷ and courses were held on New Caledonia in the use of American grenades, mines and other weapons.⁷⁸ For both armies there was much to be learned about jungle fighting and there was willingness on both sides to share information⁷⁹ and apply lessons learned, for example from the bitter American experience on New Georgia.⁸⁰ Likewise, after Goodtime a critique was conducted and

⁷⁴ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/15 Salmon to Puttick, 2 December 1943. See also Puttick's response of 8 December 1943 unequivocally upholding Barrowclough's right to appoint and change his Brigade and other commanders at will.

⁷⁵ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 121/1/1/2 Appendix 17.

⁷⁶ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 121/1/1/2 Appendix 2.

⁷⁷ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 121/1/1/5.

⁷⁸ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 121/1/1/5 Appendix 16.

⁷⁹ Bernie Harris, of 29 Battalion recalls that his unit practiced amphibious techniques on cargo ships off Guadalcanal and 'The yanks gave little tips on amphibious operations'. 'We got lectures from the yanks on their experience'. Bernie Harris Interview, 3 July 2000.

⁸⁰ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 121/1/1/8 HQ 37 Infantry Division August 20 1943 Jungle Tactics and Operations.

the lessons learned disseminated.⁸¹ New Zealand and American units frequently trained alongside one another. For example, in Exercise Mayflower in early February 1943, 29 Battalion and 1 Scots Battalion trained alongside an American battalion and with US aircraft.⁸²

Command arrangements were generally cordial but there were exceptions. When Brigadier Goss took over from Row on the Treasury Islands, he experienced friction with two American officers, who were feuding with each other. The Americans resolved this by removing their truculent officers.⁸³ General Murray wrote 'a most complimentary report on Goss' and the Americans recommended Goss for an American decoration. Barrowclough had hesitated to recommend Goss for this because of the difficulties with the feuding Americans, but he endorsed the American suggestion.⁸⁴

The New Zealanders generally came under American command. This raised the issue of the legality of American officers giving commands to New Zealand soldiers. They were subject to the Army Act, which defined a superior officer as 'an officer in His Majesty's Forces',⁸⁵ indicating a restriction to officers of the British Empire. Barrowclough issued an Administrative Order which stipulated that Allied Officers and NCOs were to be treated as if they held a corresponding rank in the New Zealand Defence Forces and refusal to obey their proper orders rendered any New Zealander liable for disciplinary action under s40 of the Army Act.⁸⁶ Because New Zealanders generally operated within their own unit structures and American senior officers issued commands through those structures, problems rarely arose.⁸⁷

⁸¹ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 151/1/23 Combined Operations - Notes on Planning, HQ 8 (NZ) Bde Gp, 30 November 1943..

⁸² Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 121/1/31.

⁸³ Archives NZ, WAI, 9, S1 Personal Papers, Conway to Barrowclough 19 June 1944.

⁸⁴ Ibid., Barrowclough to Conway, 27 June 1944.

⁸⁵ s190(4) Army Act

⁸⁶ Administrative Order No. 1, 15 November 1942.

⁸⁷ On New Caledonia a drunken New Zealand driver refused to leave from his vehicle when ordered by an American colonel. He struck an American MP who attempted to manhandle him. The soldier was charged with using insubordinate language to his superior officer. The DJAG declined to confirm the conviction on the basis that the American was not a superior officer and the particular charge had not been properly laid. Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 113/915 Courts Martial, DJAG68, A/DJAG NZEPIP to Officer I/C Administration 22 March 1944.

On Vella Lavella (September-October 1943) and the Green Islands (February 1944) New Zealand land units fought without direct assistance from their American counterparts, although United States naval and air support was involved. Operation Goodtime, in October 1943, provided a sterner test of the American/New Zealand military relationship, being a complex amphibious operation requiring intense preparation, staff work, logistical support, and naval covering fire. Seabees fought alongside the New Zealanders, although their main role was construction. Although the Americans were dominant on the water, the New Zealanders dominated in land operations.

Training and reconnaissance for the landings involved considerable co-operation. Amphibious warfare manuals had been provided to Barrowclough by USN,⁸⁸ and training in embarking and disembarking occurred on the New Hebrides and Guadalcanal, using American ships and personnel. An inspection of likely invasion beaches was carried out by USMC specialists, accompanied by Lt. Col. Trench and Solomon Islanders. Aerial photos were taken on a regular basis by American and RNZAF aircraft. Barrowclough initiated the first Cowan Patrol. This involved a multi-national team of New Zealand, Solomon Islands Defence Force (S.I.D.F.) and USAAF personnel.

Overall, the success of the interaction with United States forces can be gauged from the fact that American commanders intended to use the Division for further assaults in 1944, and its break-up was regretted by some. This contrasts with the Australian experience, with MacArthur deliberately excluding their units from the invasion of the Philippines.⁸⁹

Despite the generally good relationship, incidents occurred that led to unnecessary New Zealand casualties. In October 1943 Barrowclough offered a battery of 12 Bofors 40 mm guns to the Americans to supplement their AA defences on Vella Lavella. The offer was accepted, gun sites prepared, and officers delegated to meet each LST and arrange for the speedy off-loading and emplacement of the guns. Yet Barrowclough

⁸⁸ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, S14 Operations. Barrowclough was provided with USN & Army manuals on amphibious operations.

⁸⁹ Horner, The Commanders, p.221.

found the captains reluctant to disembark the guns. Consequently when Japanese bombers struck, some had to fire from the decks of the LSTs. Bombs hit LST 446, destroying a gun and killing the crew.⁹⁰ Barrowclough believed that ‘If my instructions had been carried out we would have suffered no casualties to that crew and it is just possible that with its better position ashore the gun might have saved the ship.’ He stressed to Wilkinson the difficulty ‘if arrangements which I make for the protection of these LST’s are to be overruled by relatively junior Naval Officers who are quite unfamiliar with our plans.’⁹¹ Wilkinson expressed his condolences but felt sure ‘from the very fact that the gun was struck that it was in the best position to defend the ship against the planes coming directly at it.’⁹²

Shortly afterwards a potentially serious ‘friendly fire’ situation arose during Operation Goodtime. The landing craft used by the Allies were equipped with a Browning machine gun operated by the coxwain’s mate. As the second wave of landing craft approached Falamai Beach, an American machine gunner sprayed the tree line where New Zealand troops were located. The temptation to return fire was resisted.⁹³

A more serious incident occurred some weeks later. The Japanese in the Solomons had become increasingly dependent on motorised barges, which became targets for Allied fighters. On 5 December 1943 3NZ Division soldiers became stranded on a reef at Suanatalia off Vella Lavella. Their barge was strafed by American aircraft.⁹⁴ Two soldiers were killed and one wounded. The American explanation was that the flight leader had been ‘test firing’ his guns and his wingman had followed his example⁹⁵. Whilst acknowledging ‘a flagrant breach of safety regulations’ and gross negligence, Major General Harmon reported that one of the pilots had been killed in combat and the other had received the maximum punishment of forfeiture of half a month’s pay and a

⁹⁰ For a graphic account, see James F Christ, Mission Raise Hell – The US Marines on Choiseul, October-November 1943, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2006, pp.1-5.

⁹¹ Archives NZ, WAI, 9, S9, Barrowclough to Wilkinson, 3 October 1943

⁹² Archives NZ, WAI, 9, S9 Wilkinson to Barrowclough, undated.

⁹³ George Hodgson Interview – Author’s Collection.

⁹⁴ The Third Division Histories Committee Pacific Saga; Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1947, p81.

⁹⁵ Accidental strafing of Allied personnel in the South Pacific was not unknown. The diversionary operation by USMC soldiers on Choiseul was jeopardised when their landing craft were shot up by US aircraft. Christ, Mission Raise Hell, pp.76-7.

formal written reprimand. Harmon said of the New Zealand dead that 'we mourn them as brothers-in-arms'.⁹⁶

On the other side of the ledger, a Seabee named Ostman during Goodtime panicked and disobeyed orders to stay in his fox-hole during the night⁹⁷. A fellow Seabee recalled 'he ran off into jungle. Shortly thereafter shots were heard and Ostman was missing in action. A year or so later a bulldozer digging a new road uncovered his body. It was determined that he had been buried next to the New Zealand Aid location. We figured that as he ran toward the New Zealand area in the dark they probably shot him thinking he was a Jap. Nonetheless, there was no ill-feeling towards New Zealanders and we were impressed with their courage and very friendly personalities.'⁹⁸

One of the areas where New Zealand made a significant contribution to the Americans, particularly in January 1943, was the provision of personnel for malaria control. The Americans were short of such personnel on Efate and welcomed men from the New Zealand Malaria Control Unit.⁹⁹ The New Zealanders gained valuable experience, while the Americans considered that 'the performance of this unit has been outstanding'.¹⁰⁰ Conversely the Americans provided the New Zealanders with Japanese language specialists.¹⁰¹

Shipping was critical for 3NZ Division, but was in short supply and communication difficulties between Wellington and the Americans exacerbated this. Barrowclough complained that in discussions with General Harmon that the Division's shipping requirements 'were not fully communicated to US AFISPA'. Harmon indicated that if the Division's needs were furnished, 'shipping will be promptly arranged'.¹⁰² Immediately prior to the Division's shift to Guadalcanal, Barrowclough considered

⁹⁶ Archives NZ, WAI, 9, S9, Major General H.R. Harmon to Barrowclough, 23 February 1944.

⁹⁷ 'The rule was at night no-one moved. If you moved you were shot'. Recollection of Tom Sen, 29 Light AA. Tom Sen Interview, 25 June 2000.

⁹⁸ Letter from R.P. Townsend, 27 May 2001. Author's Collection.

⁹⁹ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 182/6/1-6 Report of NZ Malaria Control Unit Detached Party - Lt L J Dumbleton, 12 August 1943

¹⁰⁰ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 182/6/1-6 Commander James J Saperio, USN to Barrowclough.

¹⁰¹ Third New Zealand Division Histories Committee Headquarters, Dunedin: AH & AW Reed, 1947, pp.30-31, 48.

¹⁰² Archives NZ, AD12, Box 21, Secret Cables - E. Puttick HQ 3NZ Div. to Army HQ, 24 June 1943.

shipment an American responsibility.¹⁰³ He maintained that 'they have to fulfil their part of the bargain by supplying the shipping required.'¹⁰⁴ He required at least 15 refills of ammunition delivered to Guadalcanal before he felt comfortable landing his troops, and was not prepared to certify that the Division was combat ready when it held only one day's supply of ammunition.¹⁰⁵ Moving a division from New Caledonia to Guadalcanal was beyond the capacity of New Zealand shipping.¹⁰⁶ Indeed all the Division's major movements after July 1942 were accomplished using American ships protected by American air and naval power. Without American shipping support and protection 3NZ Division could have accomplished nothing.

However, New Zealand provided some logistical support in return. New Zealand was often a source of heavy earthmoving equipment for American units. New Zealand also supplied food to American units in New Zealand, which impacted on the need for New Zealand agricultural workers. The men of 3NZ Division were regularly used to providing work parties to load and unload ships, a vital but unsung role¹⁰⁷.

One area where New Zealand and American units had to mesh was in logistics. All American personnel on Vella Lavella, the Treasury Islands and the Green Islands came under Barrowclough's command. This meant that 3NZ Division Army Service Corps became responsible for the duties of Island Quartermaster. The ASC units of 3NZ Division had to fit into the American supply system and 'worked in effect, as a U.S. Army organisation'.¹⁰⁸ It therefore had to adopt the same general American systems in the operation of supply, petrol, oil and lubricants dumps. American units were

¹⁰³ Archives NZ, WAI, 9, S9 Barrowclough to Lt. Col. W.G. Bassett, 1 August 1943.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Troop ships are specialist ships. New Zealand's Merchant Marine suffered losses early in the war and its shipping was involved in supplying Britain. Even the HMNZS Monowai, which ferried troops early in the war ended up by 1944 in European waters. Fortunately the Americans had specialist troopships which were able to satisfy a significant amount of the Division's needs.

¹⁰⁷ The effort required in unloading an LST can be gauged from Rear Admiral Wilkinson's comment that 'It was found that a LST loaded with 400 tons of loose cargo and 20 loaded 2 ½ ton trucks could be unloaded in five to six hours with a working party of 250 men and additional trucks from the beach'. National Archives, and Record Administration, FE 25/A16-3(3) Report of Occupation of Vella Lavella, p 14.

¹⁰⁸ Archives NZ AD1, 375/1/80, Report on NZASC Operations with 3 Div in South Pacific, Lt. Col. C.A. Blazey, May 1945, p.16.

cooperative but it was found desirable to appoint a New Zealand Supply Liaison Officer to the American supply (G4) system.¹⁰⁹

Indeed there were growing differences in equipment and weapons between New Zealand and American forces. Ironically, a pre-war American unit probably had more in common with their New Zealand counterparts because they were equipped with similar steel helmets, webbing and weapons. During the war American equipment changed considerably.¹¹⁰ The change did not flow through to New Zealand units because both sides decided that the Division should retain its own British-style equipment.¹¹¹ This meant it was not logistically efficient in a theatre where material had to be shipped over long distances and supplies at the front were scarce, even in 1943. By then most American weapons were equal or superior to British equivalents. The reasons why New Zealand land forces were not re-equipped while the RNZAF was partly relate to the nature of the crisis of 1942¹¹² and to continued practical difficulties in 1943. Paradoxically it was easier to supply planes and ordnance than the technologically simpler, but vaster and in some ways more complex, logistical requirements of land units.¹¹³

However, political considerations and personal preferences undoubtedly played a part. If the Division was to join British forces in the Mediterranean or Burma, it made sense to continue with British-style gear. Conversely, Barrowclough remarked that 'If we are

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Soldiers taken prisoner in the Philippines in 1941-42 were astonished at the appearance of American units liberating them in 1944-45. Hampton Sides, Ghost Soldiers, London: Little Brown & Co., 2001, p.275.

¹¹¹ The Canadians faced a similar problem with the brigade deployed as part of Invasion Force Kiska. The Canadians found the differences 'vast – not only in language, but in equipment, terminology, organisation and even insignia of rank... By the time they boarded ship for the assault, the Canadians were equipped with their own battledress and shoes, American cold weather gear and artillery and a mixture of rifles and equipment'. Brian Garfield, The Thousand Mile War – World War II in Alaska and the Aleutians, London: Aurum Press Ltd, 2004, pp.314-315.

¹¹² New Zealand received considerable quantities of Australian produced munitions and arms. The Australians predominated in the South West Pacific and retained their British style equipment and organisation. In 1942 New Zealand was desperate for arms and equipment and the Australians were generous suppliers.

¹¹³ New weaponry invariably brings with it new ways of war fighting, new doctrines and can have a profound effect on command structures. For example, the introduction of the American made Lee/Grant tank changed the way the 8th Army conducted operations in 1942. In May 1945 in considering New Zealand involvement in land operations against Japan the comment was made – 'I agree that New Zealand Division should if possible work with British forces. Our limited experience of fighting with Americans shows that difficulties do occur mostly from an organisation, equipment and training point of view. Archives NZ AD12, S28/2/26, HQ 2nd NZEF Italy to the Minister of External Affairs, 28 May 1945.

to continue to serve with the American forces here there is a very strong case for equipping us with American equipment and, indeed, for our adopting the American organisation in toto.¹¹⁴ Yet in November 1943 Puttick considered that ‘A change over to American equipment would be a fairly big job and I think premature’.¹¹⁵ In late 1944, as 3NZ Division was being disbanded, American Commanders again raised the possibility of American weapons and equipment being provided if the Division were to be reconstituted ‘because of obvious logistic difficulties hereto.’ Even then Barrowclough demurred, preferring retention of the British-made 25 pound artillery. Puttick also doubted the wisdom of such a re-equipment due to the time involved in shipping the weapons to New Zealand and then training New Zealand troops to use them.¹¹⁶

One form of American equipment the soldiers of 3NZ Division appreciated was a lightweight jungle outfit. Although Geoffrey Perret considers that the US Army ‘never managed to produce a truly satisfactory jungle suit’,¹¹⁷ those supplied to 14 Brigade were immeasurably more comfortable than woollen New Zealand outfits painted with brown and green paint used by 8 Brigade.

Nowhere was the cultural difference between New Zealanders and Americans more obvious than in food tastes and this sometimes led to disgruntlement. New Zealanders had developed a cuisine based on meat, butter and milk. The Americans had a much more diverse culinary spectrum due to the range of ethnic groups that made up their nation. Compounding matters was the fact that food spoiled quickly in the tropics and dehydrated food had to be used. The soldiers of 3NZ Division had their first exposure to chilli con carne, sauerkraut, Vienna sausage and spam. The Americans also used dried beans and dried eggs, which were not popular with the New Zealand soldiers - the greatest wastage was food cooked but not eaten. ‘Americans grew to detest New

¹¹⁴ Archives NZ, Puttick 5, W1427/5 Barrowclough to Puttick, 21 October 1943.

¹¹⁵ Archives NZ, Puttick 5, W1427/5, Puttick to Barrowclough, 4 November 1943.

¹¹⁶ Archives NZ, AD 12, 28/5, Puttick to Park, 28 March 44.

¹¹⁷ Perret, War to be Won, p.301.

Zealand mutton which they strongly suspected of being goat'.¹¹⁸ However, some New Zealanders believed the Yanks were getting better food than they were.¹¹⁹

While most New Zealand soldiers would undoubtedly have disapproved of theft from fellow citizens,¹²⁰ away from home in wartime theft became commonplace and almost a sport. In Europe 2NZ Division acquired a reputation for it.¹²¹ In the South Pacific 3NZ Division got a similar reputation for stealing from the Americans.¹²² An American joke was that it would take the New Zealanders two weeks to defeat the Japanese - one week to find them and one week to steal their equipment.¹²³ John McLeod notes that pilfering of New Zealand Army stores and equipment occurred by members of 3NZ Division and that 'American stores were also very attractive to the New Zealanders, and many were unable to restrain themselves from 'borrowing' arms, equipment and ammunition. Although HQ 2NZEFIP tried to prevent this and have "borrowed" stores handed in, they were simply ignored ...'¹²⁴ The men of 3NZ Division took delight in their larceny¹²⁵, referring to themselves as 'Barrowclough's Forty Thousand Thieves'.¹²⁶ Not that the New Zealanders were alone in helping themselves to goods

¹¹⁸ Glen Barclay, *A History of the Pacific*, London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1978, p.202.

¹¹⁹ Campbell Davie Interview, 20 June 2006. In fairness, even for the Americans the food provided by their army was not popular or palatable.

¹²⁰ 'Every soldier is familiar with that word 'acquired'. It is a term which in civilian life would have a far more ugly equivalent'. *Pacific Kiwis*, p.28.

¹²¹ John McLeod, *Myth and Reality - The New Zealand Soldier in World War II*, Auckland: Heinemann Reed, 1986, pp.132-135. McLeod comments that in Italy 'thieving became a way of life for the New Zealanders', p.133.

¹²² McLeod, p.136-7.

¹²³ Bdr G.J. Thomas, 49 Battery, 38 Field Regt, NZA, No. 1 Diary. Author's Collection.

¹²⁴ McLeod, pp.136-7.

¹²⁵ Epitomised by 'The Ballad of the Jungle Smashers', a verse of which reads:

Oh they call us 'Jungle Smashers'
and say we fight the Japs
And we wear the shoulder flashes
just to show we've been in scraps
But the booty we've taken there is nothing when its seen
By the blooming pile we've captured from the United States Marines
(To the tune of the Marine Hymn)

Author unknown, but a member of 144 Ind.Bty 3NZ Division, Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ426/33/5

¹²⁶ *Pacific Pioneers*, p.29.

from their own side - US Marines on Guadalcanal stole GI supplies.¹²⁷ The 93rd NCB became known as 'Harold Lynn (the commander) and his Thousand Thieves'.¹²⁸

The range of items pilfered was extensive and included ammunition cases, the hinges from ammunition boxes, and even parts of bombs! This caused Lt Col. Bryden to threaten a court martial for anyone interfering with ammunition dumps.¹²⁹ Yet officers sometimes turned a blind eye to their men's larceny. A Court of Enquiry into the theft of clothing from the wharves of Noumea in 1944 found that one officer was 'aware that his men had been thieving' but took no action. Another 'was conniving at thieving by the men'.¹³⁰ Lt. Col. Bennett criticised some of the Division's officers for 'shirking their responsibilities' in seizing unlawfully held 'US arms warlike stores and equipment and ammunition from officers and other ranks'.¹³¹

From the Division's inception there were shortages of weapons and equipment and as it moved forward logistical difficulties escalated.¹³² In Fiji in 1942, lack of engineering equipment led to misappropriation.¹³³ The fact that their allies had so much more equipment than the New Zealanders contributed to the problem. American supplies on Guadalcanal led 3NZ Division engineers engaged in road building 'to marvel at the wealth of material possessions of American troops. There were many gaping mouths as we wandered about the dumps at Lunga Point and several truckloads of useful matter passed back ... to decorate the New Zealand engineer camps'.¹³⁴

¹²⁷ Carl K. Hixon, Guadalcanal, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1999, p.142. See also James F. Christ Battalion of the Damned, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2007, pp.173-174, which describes US Marine Paratroopers tasked with offloading supplies stealing supplies for themselves.

¹²⁸ A Seabee thought 'that a man from the 93rd could be picked out because he wore army shoes, an officer's pants, navy shirt, marine hat....' Robert W. Conner, 93rd NCB, Diary entry 2 January 1944 Volume 2, November 1943-December 1944, 93rd Seabee's Battalion, <http://www.934net/diary>.

¹²⁹ 38 RD Regt Routine Order 195, 20 January 1944.

¹³⁰ Archives NZ, WAIL, DAZ 113/9/6 Courts of Inquiry, Brig. Dove, 6 September 1944.

¹³¹ Archives NZ, WAIL, DAZ 121/9/A8/2 Lt. Col. Bennett, AA & QMG to 3 Div. units, 21 March 1944.

¹³² It is important to note that theft of New Zealand stores and equipment took place causing Brigadier Dove to complain of 'considerable' pillaging of stores' and 'heavy losses' of essential equipment in the course of the Division's moves. The stealing of rations and other stores resulted in short issues and made operations difficult. Dove blamed the lackadaisical approach of officers to such things. Barrowclough was determined to stamp out such thefts. Archives NZ, WAIL DAZ 121/9/A8 Discipline Brig. Dove to Officers, 2 October 1943. Also Archives NZ WAIL, 1, Z121.2/1/8 HQ 3NZ Division 1943-1944 Stealing by Troops of 3NZ Division Lt Col Bennett AA & QMG, 27 September 1943.

¹³³ Pacific Pioneers, p.29.

¹³⁴ Pacific Engineers, p.31.

Similar attitudes prevailed regarding the appropriation of goods for personal consumption. 'The Provost Corps certainly had some trouble in checking up on the correct number of bottles ex the holds of several ships. A whisky case which went overboard was retrieved with grappling irons as well as other things.'¹³⁵ 'In the extraction of bottles from the wire netting enclosure at Samambula Camp the engineers enjoyed some notoriety'.¹³⁶ Again, in comparison to American forces, the Kiwis were deprived, with the former provided with ice cream, beer and other luxuries unheard of for New Zealand units¹³⁷.

To the New Zealanders, the American bases codenamed 'Acorns' were veritable Aladdin's caves.¹³⁸ The rationale was that since much of this equipment was not being used by the Americans and since the New Zealanders had an obvious need it was all right to take it. Barrowclough alluded to this stating 'There is a tendency with all of us to admire the initiative of a good Quartermaster and to 'ask no questions' as to where he acquired this or that article. No one is justified in this complacent attitude.'¹³⁹

Cultural attitudes were also influential. Americans often considered that broken down equipment should be abandoned and replaced,¹⁴⁰ whereas the New Zealanders with their more limited resources repaired equipment where possible. There was a belief that once

American equipment left the Continental United States it was 'written off'. The Americans confirmed this by abandoning prefab buildings, tractors, trucks and equipment on New Caledonia.¹⁴¹ Abandoned American equipment was 'fair game' and sometimes it became debatable whether such equipment was genuinely abandoned. Barrowclough acknowledged this when he said 'I do not mean to say that a unit is never justified in appropriating any of the thousand and one articles which are commonly

¹³⁵ Pacific Pioneers, p.109.

¹³⁶ Pacific Pioneers, p.108.

¹³⁷ Ron Tucker Interview, 9 March 2000.

¹³⁸ The theory was that the Seabees would build the airstrip and the Acorn unit would operate it. The 93rd NCB had Acorn 15 attached to it in the hope that this would promote efficiency. 93rd Seabees Battalion <http://www.seabees93.net>.

¹³⁹ Archives NZ, AD 1, 375/1/2 Misappropriation of Property, Barrowclough, 20 December 1942.

¹⁴⁰ When the NZ Engineers on the Green Islands began to pack up their D8 tractors for transport back to New Caledonia in 1944 the Americans told them to leave them and promised that new ones would be provided in New Caledonia. David Williams Interview, 7 July 2006.

¹⁴¹ Campbell Davie Interview.

found strewn all over the country. For example, it might be quite proper to take an empty and abandoned petrol drum if it was wanted as a field oven or a boiler for hot water for washing mess utensils.¹⁴²

Sometimes it was simply a case of misunderstanding and expediency. On New Caledonia in 1943 New Zealand Engineers found themselves undertaking 'service engineering', such as maintaining water distribution points and constructing roads, rather than training to be combat engineers. The expectation had been that the Americans would provide service engineering for the Division. Consequently the engineers often had neither the training nor equipment to carry out such tasks.¹⁴³ Construction materials known as 'class IV supplies were supposed to have been supplied by the Americans, but they were in chronically short supply¹⁴⁴ and 'scrounging' for construction materials ensued.¹⁴⁵

American generosity was another factor. Instances occurred where American Quartermasters gave New Zealand soldiers food¹⁴⁶ and equipment ('take what you want'). On the Green Islands the American units were much better equipped with tarpaulins than the New Zealand troops and they responded to an American invitation to help themselves.¹⁴⁷ Trade of goods occurred at an individual level even though both armies frowned on it. A New Zealander in possession of American binoculars he had paid for raised issues of ownership. Barrowclough commented 'it has been made clear to troops that it is an offence to accept gifts or transfers of US Army stores but there is no general Force order prohibiting our personnel from being in possession of American property'.¹⁴⁸ Soldiers acquired American windbreakers.¹⁴⁹ A thriving trade in Japanese souvenirs, often manufactured, took place with American personnel. In one instance a

¹⁴² Archives NZ, AD 1, 375/1/2, Misappropriation of Property, Barrowclough, 20 December 1942.

¹⁴³ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 209/1/25 Asst Dir F & W to QMG 29 June 1943.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. Appendix III.

¹⁴⁶ Ron Tucker recalled that on Nissan his unit was short of tea. They went to the American camp where the cook had a plentiful supply of loose tea. He gave them tea and a pot explaining 'We don't drink tea – drop the pot back'. Ron Tucker Interview.

¹⁴⁷ David Williams Interview 7 July 2006.

¹⁴⁸ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 121/9/A8/2 Barrowclough to Army HQ, 15 July 1944.

¹⁴⁹ New Zealand soldiers were given access to PX facilities. Campbell Davies records that he purchased cheap shoes. Campbell Davie Interview, June 2006.

New Zealand soldier purchased an American carbine on New Caledonia.¹⁵⁰ Another soldier was charged with disobeying a command to hand over US firearms.¹⁵¹

Opportunities for pilfering were understandably greatest in rear areas. A veteran described how members of 29 Battalion were ordered to unload American supply ships in New Caledonia and proceeded to pilfer clothes and equipment.¹⁵² New Zealand troops were frequently detailed to provide labour and some resented being 'wharfies for the Yanks'.¹⁵³ One veteran summed up his perception of the New Zealand contribution. 'I always thought we were nuisance value to the Yanks but came in handy for rolling many fuel drums to dumps'.¹⁵⁴

In April 1944 Barrowclough received a memo from COMFAIRSOUTH 'alleging neglect in the development of ACORN camps and making certain allegations regarding the non-delivery to the ACORNS of certain equipment'. Barrowclough noted that 'this was more or less a revival of complaints made by Commander Cotten some time ago. I investigated them and found them without justification and Cotten withdrew his charges. It is to be regretted that COMFAIRSOUTH on a short and cursory visit to the island (Nissan) should have rushed into print with charges he cannot possibly substantiate'.¹⁵⁵ Barrowclough offered to send his Provost Marshal around the camps on Green Island to arrange delivery of any misappropriated items and take disciplinary action. Later, the Americans acknowledged that 'the material seems to have been abandoned at the Russells by the Acorns' and some of the misplaced equipment was recovered. The problem originated with agreements between the American Air Center Commander and the Seabee Commander. A list had been prepared and items had been misreported as having been shipped to Green Island.¹⁵⁶

A huge amount of American material flowed into the South Pacific and some became genuinely spoiled or damaged. Manual bookkeeping methods meant it was sometimes

¹⁵⁰ Archives NZ, DAZ 121/9/A8-2 Discipline - Conduct of Troops, Captain DAAG, 1 November 1943.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 9 May 1944.

¹⁵² George Hodgson Interview.

¹⁵³ The need to load and unload ships required fit men, who were in short supply. NZ units spent considerable time in this. Campbell Davie Interview, June 2006.

¹⁵⁴ Andy Lysaght – correspondence 15 January 2007. Author's Collection..

¹⁵⁵ War Diary, GOC 3NZ Division 3-5 April 1944, p.58. See also Archives NZ, WAIL, 9, S9, Barrowclough to Rear Admiral Gunther, 4 April 1944.

¹⁵⁶ Archives NZ, WAIL, 9, S9 Rear Admiral E.L. Gunther to Barrowclough, 9 April 1944.

difficult to ascertain the fate of items. Barrowclough was astonished and appalled that the Americans had not marked their gear for identification. Slipshod accounting and ill defined areas of responsibility led to gear being abandoned.¹⁵⁷

Other misunderstandings arose. For example, the Americans complained that on the move of 3NZ Division to another area it 'was found that some \$150,000.00 worth of subsistence was held by them in excess of actual requirement. Another large excess of our supplies, including over 2,000 tons subsistence, was held by NZ forces in Tonga. In both instances considerable spoilage had ensued due to building up of such large reserve stocks.'¹⁵⁸ Barrowclough pointed out he had been directed by Island Command in New Caledonia to maintain levels of supply and some of the rations had been inherited from preceding American units. When 3NZ Division had moved northwards it had not been replaced and the extra rations taken over. It was therefore inevitable that the Division's rear formation would be holding excess rations.¹⁵⁹

Unlike in Italy there was no thriving black market. Anything stolen had to be either used or eaten. Similarly, little opportunity existed for spiriting items back to New Zealand. Mail was censored and possession of American equipment was not officially condoned. Fortunes were not made from theft of American items. More legitimate trade also took place. On the Green Islands a Seabee noted in his diary 'bought some shell beads for Lib that one of the New Zealanders made'.¹⁶⁰ Japanese souvenirs (samurai swords), some manufactured, were sold to the Americans, as was illicitly brewed alcohol.

Barrowclough maintained impeccable honesty throughout¹⁶¹ and was strongly against theft from the Americans. Orders were issued that American equipment was to be surrendered.¹⁶² Possession of such things was an offence triable by court martial and

¹⁵⁷ Archives NZ, WAIL, 9, S9, Barrowclough to Gunther.

¹⁵⁸ Archives NZ, WAIL, 9, S9 Lt. Col. Henry Bertz, Memo, 7 January 1944.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, Barrowclough to Breene, 28 January 1944.

¹⁶⁰ Robert W. Conner 93rd Seabees Diary Entry, 27 March 1944. <http://www.seabees.93.netdiary>.

¹⁶¹ On the return of the Division to New Zealand, Barrowclough purchased at auction items from his Mess - recollection of his daughter Joan Clouston.

¹⁶² The Americans likewise issued orders forbidding American troops to have unauthorised possession of Allied property. Archives NZ, WAIL, 1, DAZ 121/9/A82, Captain Vrtjak to HQ, NZEFIP 14 July 1944.

was to be 'severely punished.'¹⁶³ However, there were few, if any, instances of disciplinary proceedings for pilferage.¹⁶⁴ Two soldiers charged with theft of American equipment were Court martialed and acquitted.¹⁶⁵

Radio communications were another area where co-operation was necessary. Barrowclough commented on a meeting with Lt. Hutchins, USN regarding his duties as Island Radio and Communications Officer, that it 'was a rather complicated affair in view of our unfamiliarity with US ideas on the control of communications in these various Islands where Army, Navy and Marine Corps and Air Forces organisations are so independent of each other'.¹⁶⁶ Beyond receiving XIV Corps general directives there was nothing specific about signals, radio and radar.¹⁶⁷

George Bernard Shaw quipped that the English and Americans were divided by a common language¹⁶⁸ and this was true of the New Zealand-American relationship in 1942. The New Zealanders found that some of the expressions used by the Americans 'distinctly quaint and odd.'¹⁶⁹ Doubtless the feeling was reciprocated. The problem was broader.

Even their common language sometimes proved a barrier as much as a bond, by encouraging confusion and misunderstanding. It was not simply a matter of different idioms, or of words used in different senses. American staff officers, articulate, enthusiastic, with an inexhaustible appetite for detail were frankly baffled by the scanty and laconic reports they received from Australian and New Zealand officers in the field. National traits magnified the confusion; Australians would tend to describe a completely satisfactory defensive action, in which an enemy attack had been repelled with heavy casualties, in terms which would imply to Americans that the defenders had been routed. Australian staff officers were being anything but facetious when they suggested that what the

¹⁶³ Barrowclough, 20 December 1942.

¹⁶⁴ This is evidenced by the fact that the AD 'Misappropriation of Property' file is a slim one with only Barrowclough's memo on it.

¹⁶⁵ Archives NZ, DAZ 121/9/A8 Discipline, Base Provost Section 13 June 1943.

¹⁶⁶ War Diary GOC 3NZ Division 24 October 1943.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 22-23 October 1943.

¹⁶⁸ Susan Ratcliffe (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary of Thematic Quotations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p.215.

¹⁶⁹ Third New Zealand Division Histories Committee *Headquarters*, Dunedin: AH & AW Reed 1947, p.29.

ANZACS and the Americans needed most urgently was a corps of interpreters.¹⁷⁰

The problem might have been eased if the Americans had accepted Barrowclough's request to have an American officer attached to his Divisional Headquarters.

A Commander in the US Shore Patrol at Noumea warned New Zealand officers 'to choose their drinking companions carefully and to keep a guard on their tongues at all times.' He warned that certain types of American officers who he variously described as 'mean', 'ornery' and 'just plain crazy' posed a danger. 'There are many New Zealanders who fail to realise that they do not speak quite the same language as Americans and they occasionally use a word or phrase which although harmless to them offers an excuse for offence.'¹⁷¹ A New Zealand gunner on New Caledonia stole an Army Jeep and was pursued by American MPs. When questioned by an American MP officer he defiantly quipped 'If you would speak decent English I might be able to understand you.'¹⁷²

The most serious example of miscommunication led to New Zealand suffering its highest ranking casualty in the war. After being appointed GOC of 3NZ Division, Major General O.H Mead arranged to fly from Fiji to Tonga on an RNZAF Hudson on 25 July 1942. Because of American security precautions, the aircraft was required to maintain radio silence and the navigator could not check the aircraft's position. A navigational error occurred and was later found to be the primary cause of the aircraft's loss. However, the Court of Inquiry found that the aircrew 'carried out everything in their power to rectify the previous error in navigation and finally lost the machine while carrying out directions from the ground issued through WT Tonga.'¹⁷³ The Hudson had arrived near Tonga and radioed that it had only an hour's fuel left. The American Naval Station 'Bleacher' had the plane on radar, but the officer in charge mistook it for other aircraft and issued directions that led to it flying away from Tonga to its doom.¹⁷⁴ A Court of inquiry sat in New Zealand and was not able to question American personnel.

¹⁷⁰ Barclay, p.203.

¹⁷¹ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 121/9/A8 Discipline - Conduct of Troops J.A. Tarleton, Noumea Transit Camp, 12 November 1943.

¹⁷² Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 121/9/A8 Discipline

¹⁷³ Archives NZ, Air, Series 25, 25/2/634.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., R.W. Goddard to Minister of Defence, 23 October 1942.

No action was taken against the radar operator and a memo to the Chief of Air Staff advised that 'it would be most unwise to give relatives full details and in both the public and service interests I feel that the passing of details of the accident should be restricted.'¹⁷⁵

Amphibious operations are complex and it is unsurprising that the movement of 14 Brigade to its landing beaches on Vella Lavella resulted in confusion and casualties. Rear Admiral Wilkinson apologised for this commenting that 'we had the loading data and you had the beach data; it became again a problem of exchange of information.'¹⁷⁶

The problem of cultural differences and lack of communication is exemplified by the troops of the 1st Marine Division prior to the invasion of Guadalcanal having to unload cargo ships and combat-load them because Wellington watersiders refused to do so. Vandegrift was unimpressed by his 'first introduction to practical socialism'.¹⁷⁷ On the other hand, the Americans had not explained to the watersiders that the ships were being reloaded for a combat situation.

One vivid divide between New Zealand and American forces was in the area of race relations. Despite European dominance in New Zealand, there was an acceptance of Maori. In contrast, American forces were strictly segregated along racial lines.¹⁷⁸ American soldiers, particularly from the South, expected racial segregation to apply to New Zealand units and their facilities. This caused resentment and tension.

Bill Ashton records that when his artillery unit was in Fiji in 1942 his unit fraternised with Fijians. The Americans treated the Fijians as 'niggers'.

The only 'blacks' the US Army employed were in store and supply and as drivers but never as combat troops.' This outlook and atmosphere did not make a good impression and when the Suva Everymans Club which was open to ALL

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., Group Captain to CAS, 13 October 1942.

¹⁷⁶ Archives NZ, WAI, 9, S9 Rear Admiral T.S. Wilkinson to Major General Barrowclough, Undated, probably October 1943.

¹⁷⁷ Robert B. Asprey, Once a Marine - The Memoirs of General A.A. Vandegrift, New York: WW Norton & Co., 1964, pp.102-103.

¹⁷⁸ Ulysses Lee, The US Army in World War 2. The Employment of Negro Troops, Washington: United States Government Printing, 1966. By 1945 some 70,000 Black Americans were serving in the US Army, making up about 10% of the overall total.

troops of all races was asked by the Yanks to admit 'whites' only and of course they refused, the American hospitality organisation brought the entire building the Club was in, in downtown Suva and converted it to THEIR type of recreational centre, British and Colonial feelings were running pretty high. The bigotry of the 'good ole boys' units from the American South had to be seen to be believed! As they objected to being in the same company as our Maori troops and obviously considered them as 'Nigrahs'! Our Allies!! We were being educated.¹⁷⁹

The American Army believed that 'blacks wouldn't fight, couldn't fight' and were 'too unskilled, too unhealthy, too undisciplined' to be good service troops. If it had been 'possible to fight and win without them, chances are that no more than token number of blacks would have worn khaki.'¹⁸⁰ The 93rd Division composed of black soldiers was spread around the Pacific as garrison troops¹⁸¹ and blacks were used as service troops. Black soldiers garrisoned the Cook Islands.

Both New Zealand and black American soldiers were used as service troops. On 9 February 1943 206 New Zealanders from 30 Battalion worked on the docks at Noumea, which brought them into contact with black soldiers. 'The dry phlegmatic ways of the negroes amused our boys. They could sleep anywhere and stacks of bailed hay proved too much of a temptation for many tired coloured boys. During their meal hour, they played complicated card games'. They, like the New Zealanders, took the opportunity of purloining cases of beer.¹⁸²

The presence of black units around Bourail in 1943 caused anxieties to New Zealand and French authorities as these units appeared poorly disciplined.¹⁸³ Complaints were made by the Governor to the New Zealanders and Dove replied that if there were specific cases of New Zealand soldiers misbehaving severe disciplinary action would be taken. However, he had no responsibility for American coloured troops.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁹ Bill Ashton, 'An Enjoyable War', unpublished manuscript, 23 December 1997, pp.14-15.

¹⁸⁰ Geoffrey Perret, War to be Won.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.453.

¹⁸² Pacific Kiwis, p.46.

¹⁸³ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 121/9/8A Discipline. Col. Dove to Island Command, 3 May 1943.

¹⁸⁴ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 121/9/A8/2 Brigadier Dove to Governor-General of New Caledonia, 10 November 1943.

There was conflict in New Zealand between New Zealand servicemen and civilians and American servicemen but it is unclear whether race played a part. Allegations were certainly made that American servicemen had insulted Maori.¹⁸⁵ Although there were no Maori units within 3NZ Division,¹⁸⁶ Halsey welcomed the possibility of having a Maori battalion and assured Wellington that Maori would not be subject to discrimination. Barrowclough had his doubts.

‘Whilst senior officers might accept them, I am seriously afraid Maori officers and soldiers would be subjected to indignities which they should not have to endure. Have heard of similar incidents in relation to Negro officers serving here. Americans relations with their Negro troops might be disturbed as a result of Negroes observing equality of status as between Maori and Pakeha.’¹⁸⁷

It is possible that the fact that the Division was composed overwhelmingly of Europeans may have aided its acceptance with some Americans.

Dower has recorded the dehumanising effects of the war in the Pacific.¹⁸⁸ He maintains that the element of race conflict made the war particularly vicious and desecration of enemy dead a common practice. Barrowclough experienced this unsavoury aspect first hand. His War Diary records:

The success of the operation on the afternoon of the 20th (Feb. 1944) soon became generally known and numbers of American soldiers appeared from everywhere hunting for souvenirs. Most of the legitimate souvenirs had already been taken by our troops, guns, swords, rifles, etc., but this did not deter these American visitors who thoroughly turned over the dead bodies, even extracting the teeth of the dead (note - for gold fillings). We put a stop to this ghoulish business and sent them packing.¹⁸⁹

Likewise, Barrowclough had to order the burial of Japanese dead in the aftermath of Goodtime.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁵ Harry Bioletti, The Yanks Are Coming, Auckland: Century Hutchinson, 1989, pp.151, 157-158.

¹⁸⁶ There were, however, individuals of Maori descent within 3NZ Division.

¹⁸⁷ Archives NZ, AD 12, 28/15/1, Barrowclough to NZ Army HQ, 4 February 1943.

¹⁸⁸ John Dower, War Without Mercy, New York: Pantheon Books, 1986.

¹⁸⁹ War Diary, GOC 3NZ Division, 21February 1944 to 25 February 1944, p.50.

¹⁹⁰ Cowan Interview.

The war in the South Pacific brought thousands of Americans and New Zealanders into contact. Some of these contacts resulted in friendships which spanned decades.¹⁹¹ Other contacts fuelled by testosterone, alcohol and nationalism resulted in brawls. Generally the American attitude towards the Kiwis was one of bemused tolerance. The Kiwis were somewhat reserved and exotic but nonetheless spoke a similar language and had similar value systems.

The Seabees universally impressed the New Zealanders. The Naval Construction Battalions were the US Navy's answer to the lack of airfield and port facilities in the South Pacific. Generally composed of older men skilled in heavy construction work, they were able to complete complex engineering feats in very short time. No New Zealand officer would dare presume to give these very competent professionals orders.¹⁹² The respect was reciprocated with one Seabee on the Green Islands writing in his diary 'only a few snipers remain and the New Zealanders – wicked fighters – have them under control ... our boys can say only the best for the New Zealanders'.¹⁹³

The New Zealanders discovered that the Americans were not monolithic but made up of various service branches, each with its own idiosyncrasies. Sometimes this clash of cultures led to literally explosive results. On Vella Lavella in October 1943 two Americans from the 2nd Marine Corps Parachute Battalion drove their truck into a New Zealand run rubbish dump. The rubbish was to be burned and then a bulldozer would bury the ashes. After they had dumped their waste the Americans observed that the New Zealand soldier responsible could not get the rubbish lit because it was too wet. One of the Americans helpfully suggested that they obtain some aviation fuel from barrels located in a dump some hundred feet away. The New Zealander said that 'I would if I could'. The Americans then produced a wrench from their truck and one of them unscrewed the cap on one of the barrels. The New Zealander grabbed a 5 gallon can that was in the Americans' rubbish and placed it in the fuel barrel and filled it. He then returned to the rubbish dump where he threw the fuel on the rubbish and lit it. To their horror 'a small line of flame ignited and raced back to the fuel barrels with

¹⁹¹ Sgt. W.A. Cowan received for many years copies of 'National Geographic' as a gift from one of the air crew he had rescued on Mono Island. Cowan Interviews.

¹⁹² David Williams Interview 7 July 2006.

¹⁹³ Robert W. Conner, 93rd NCB Diary entry 25 February 1944, Volume 2 November 1943 – December 1944 <http://www.seabees.93.net> Diary.

unbelievable speed'. The resulting explosion destroyed not only the fuel dump but also the truck. The three soldiers were miraculously unhurt because they had all run into the surf. 'What the New Zealander had not known was that the Marines, as a force of habit, when disposing of trash at sea punched a hole in their gas cans so that garbage would sink, to prevent leaving a trail for enemy submarines to follow. Habits die hard, and even on land, the Marines punched holes in the cans. When they filled the five gallon container, Brutind and Carpenter forgot they would be leaving a trail of high octane fuel from the fuel drums to the trash.'¹⁹⁴

New Zealand and American soldiers were segregated but proximity and curiosity encouraged contacts. A young Seabee truck driver on Stirling Island was impressed by the friendliness of the New Zealanders manning anti-aircraft emplacements:

They were always waving and shouting greetings to us as we drove by. One day we decided to stop and chat with these friendly fellows. Of course, there was always a pot of tea brewing and they graciously invited us to have some. From that day on and for many months to follow, tea with that particular gun crew became a matter of routine. They would share their baked goods from home with us and we in turn would sometimes provide a tin of pineapple slices or pears that we managed to procure in our travels.¹⁹⁵

Particularly in front-line areas there appears to have been an attitude of 'we are all in this together'. Gunner Campbell Davies recalls that his artillery unit in the Treasury Islands was frequently visited by soldiers from a neighbouring American AA unit. There was the shared experience of Japanese air raids¹⁹⁶ and they got on well. Similarly, Major David Williams of 8 Brigade remembers that the New Zealanders and Americans in the Solomons shared the same dangers and discomforts and were comrades in arms.¹⁹⁷

The New Zealanders were not above 'poking the borax' at the Americans. A staged landing of US Marines from a landing craft with the Americans with bayonets fixed

¹⁹⁴ Christ, *Mission Raise Hell*, pp.82-3. *Headquarters* refers to 'An immense American dump among the palms caught fire and burned explosively for days

¹⁹⁵ Letter from George E. Tschudi, 23 May 2001. Author's Collection.

¹⁹⁶ Campbell Davie Interview.

¹⁹⁷ David Williams Interview, 7 July 2006.

rushing up the beach brought cheering and catcalls from New Zealand soldiers who were witnessing the filming on Green Island in 1944.¹⁹⁸ Occasionally behaviour was reckless. Soldiers from 3NZ Division Tank Squadron on Guadalcanal were perturbed by bullets hitting the New Zealand camp from nearby American troops 'fishing with automatic weapons'. They reciprocated when their tanks deviated slightly from the practice area and fired till their ammunition was expended. 'The following day we heard that our shots had passed over the American camp and we had kept them in their foxholes all day'.¹⁹⁹

The New Zealanders on New Caledonia sometimes hosted American soldiers in their base area of Bourail. In 1944 this caused concern because it was found that an American deserter had found shelter and food with the New Zealanders.²⁰⁰ He commented that 'The New Zealand authorities are very lax in checking American personnel who eat at these camps regularly.'

Generally the more unpleasant interactions between Americans and New Zealanders occurred in the rear areas and were alcohol fuelled. American MPs were usually tolerant of drunken New Zealanders.²⁰¹ However, there was one instance of New Zealand soldiers being clubbed by black MPs.²⁰² Liquor sometimes exposed ugly nationalisms such as those of a drunken New Zealand driver visiting a dance at Camp Hadsell, Bourail. He cursed an American officer and made insulting remarks about his division and all Americans. The officer told New Zealand MPs that he merely wanted the drunk removed, but the latter and a companion returned half an hour later. This time the officer ordered his MPs to put them off the Camp Ground and reported the incident to NZ HQ.²⁰³ New Zealanders were not the only ones to get drunk. Brigadier Dove complained about drunken American officers causing a disturbance outside HQ,

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Jeffrey Plowman, Rampant Dragons – New Zealanders in Armour in World War II, Christchurch: Kiwi Armour, 2002, p.43.

²⁰⁰ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 121/9/8A Discipline, Office of Provost Marshal, 23 July 1944.

²⁰¹ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 121/9/A8/2 Lt. A.J. Gadbois to Office of the Provost Marshal 1 Island Command 2 July 1944. An American MP officer was sworn at by a New Zealand Lance Corporal who he arrested. He generously explained that the soldier '... at the time of his arrest was heavily under the influence of liquor and in my opinion was not responsible for his actions.'

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 121/9/A8/2, Lt. E.L. Ayers to OC Base Provost, 15 September 1944.

NZEFIP. It turned out that the officers were delivering a case of whisky to a New Zealand officer.²⁰⁴

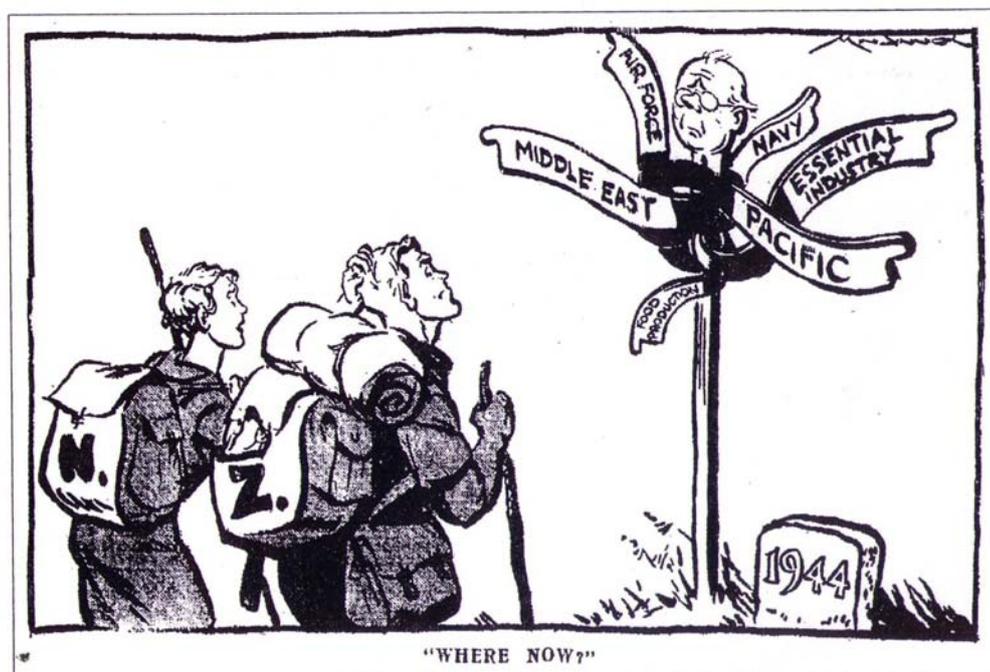
The war in the South Pacific was dominated by the Americans and 3NZ Division had to work within an American framework. It provided garrisons, combat troops for operations, medical facilities (particularly Malaria Control Units), labour for the essential task of shifting supplies and troops for intelligence operations. The Americans provided transport, food and equipment, naval and aerial support, and assigned the New Zealanders tasks. Overall on a tactical and operational level the relationship was comfortable, with the parties respecting each other's abilities. On a political and strategic level, however, the relationship was often marred by miscommunication, obfuscation, misunderstanding and divergent national interests. By 1944 American disgruntlement and New Zealand's manpower problems²⁰⁵ effectively precluded further combat operations by 3NZ Division.

²⁰⁴ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 121/9/A8/2 HQ Base Provost Section, 3 August 1944.

²⁰⁵ Some 1700 New Zealanders were employed in New Zealand in support of the United States Armed Forces. A proposal was made in October 1943 that Americans not fit for active service could undertake such roles thereby freeing up New Zealand manpower. Halsey firmly rejected this suggestion indicating that there were only two categories – the sick were returned to America, the well were on active operations. Archives NZ, EA1, 87/21/3. Minister of External Affairs, Wellington, to Charge d'Affaires, NZ Legation, Washington, 10 October 1943.

CHAPTER 6: DEATH OF A DIVISION

3NZ Division was disbanded after it had gained the respect of American commanders, built up a good working relationship with American forces, had become adequately equipped and had achieved victories. It was disbanded despite strong opposition from Barrowclough, and the support of the Chief of Imperial General Staff. The decision was taken at a high political level and after much debate. Ultimately, the issue was where New Zealand's limited resources could best be deployed. The survival of 2NZ Division and the demise of 3NZ division in part demonstrate the importance Wellington attached to its Commonwealth ties and the fact that by 1944 New Zealand was safe from invasion and the American connection was less important. The decision making process was characterised by Wellington's reluctance to forego strategic options by disbanding one of its divisions and disbandment was not completed until 20 October 1944. Even then there were suggestions of a Pacific Division being reconstituted in 1945. This chapter addresses the questions of why the Division was disbanded, and what the reasons for disbandment indicated about the New Zealand Government's perception of its country's position in the post-war world.



'Where Now?' by Gordon Minhinnick, *New Zealand Herald*, 4 January 1944. New Zealand puzzles over Prime Minister Fraser's manpower conundrum.

From its inception, 3NZ Division was starved of manpower, with personnel actually being taken from it to bolster 2NZ Division.¹ Whereas the creation and development of that division was deliberate and methodical, 3NZ Division was an afterthought, a reaction to a strategic need. Once that need had been met by the blunting of the Japanese drive south, the existence of the Division was open for debate. That debate centred on where New Zealand could best contribute to the victory of the British Commonwealth - with 2NZ Division in Europe, with 3NZ Division in the Pacific, or producing food and manufactured goods for the Allies. Indeed, the decision to deploy 3NZ Division's overseas had been critically influenced by the fact that there had been a good harvest in 1942.² At various points the focus switched between these aspects.

As the war progressed there were increasing demands on New Zealand's limited pool of manpower for service in the two divisions overseas, the Royal New Zealand Navy, the RNZAF, the RAF, the British Merchant Marine, the Home Defence Forces (especially in 1942), and agriculture and industry.³ Unlike World War I, when New Zealand's military effort after 1916 had been focused on sustaining one division on the Western Front and a mounted rifle brigade in Palestine, World War II required a greater deployment of manpower in depth and breadth.⁴ New Zealand struggled to cope by introducing conscription and manpowering its population into essential industries. It rapidly became clear that New Zealand could not sustain for long the deployment of two divisions overseas and the choice became between letting one or both divisions shrink

¹ Between March 1940 (when the Fanning Island Garrison was established) to August 1941 roughly 3,500 Pacific troops were sent to the Middle East. There was a hiatus when Japan entered the war but the movement of Pacific troops to 2NZ Division restarted with the 8th Reinforcements on 12 December 1942 when the threat of invasion passed. From late 1943 the flow of Pacific soldiers to Europe increased – 2,115 sailed with the 14th Reinforcements followed by another 1,000 with the 15th Reinforcements on 21 April 1945. Archives NZ WAI, 1, DA 443.3/3 Chronology of 3 Division. File note O.A. Gillespie.

² Archives NZ, AD Series 12, NZSOPAC to Defender, 23 July 1943.

³ As at 31 December 1943 New Zealand had a population of 1,630,000 and of that the male population aged between 14 and 64 was 600,000. But of that male population only 330,000 were in the service ages (18-40). Some 129,341 were in the Army, Air Force and Navy. Archives NZ, AD12, 28/2 Combined Chiefs of Staff, No 499, New Zealand Manpower, Appendix A. 26 February 1944.

⁴ In World War One Wellington had been concerned about British demands on its limited manpower. John Crawford considers it arguable 'that in the First World War New Zealand proved better at resisting the temptation to overcommit its resources than it did in the Second World War'. John Crawford "New Zealand is Being Bled to Death"; The Formation, Operations and Disbandment of the Fourth Brigade' in John Crawford and Ian McGibbon (eds), *New Zealand's Great War*, Auckland: Exisle Publishing Ltd, 2007, p.265. New Zealand was pressured to provide a second division in 1917 but was able to provide only the Fourth Brigade. This eventually had to be broken up to provide reinforcements for the New Zealand Division in 1918.

in size or disbanding one to bolster the other. There were penalties associated with each choice. Not surprisingly, Wellington procrastinated and sought to preserve its options.

In 1940 2NZ Division had been created and deployed overseas under British command. It was recognised that if Britain fell New Zealand's future as an independent country was in jeopardy. Its best option appeared to be to contribute to British victory in Europe while maintaining some degree of local defence against possible threats. The units that would be the foundation of 3NZ Division were created to garrison Fiji to avoid its seizure by the Japanese. The strategic situation from Wellington's perspective changed drastically with Japan's entry into the war and its successful strike south. Suddenly it faced the prospect of invasion or, at the very least, raids. Wellington was obliged to think more in terms of homeland defence and for a brief period soldiers were sent to bolster 3NZ Division at the expense of 2NZ Division, and mobilisation of home defence forces reached a peak.⁵ Fraser viewed the Pacific as a priority.⁶ In a secret session of Parliament on 19 March 1942, he referred to the Japanese as 'only within a few days sailing of New Zealand' and that New Zealand had to prepare for an attack 'on a large scale'.⁷ It was clear that New Zealand could not defend itself with the forces available and the prospect arose of withdrawing 2NZ Division from the Mediterranean.⁸ Canberra insisted on two of its divisions in transit to the Dutch East Indies being returned to Australia.⁹ Freyberg feared there would be pressure on Fraser to follow Australia and deploy 2NZ division to the Pacific. He recommended that it be left in place and highlighted the shipping problems and critical importance of the Middle East to Allied strategy.¹⁰ The deciding factor was the American agreement to despatch troops to New Zealand in exchange for New Zealand troops remaining in the Middle East.¹¹ Fraser indicated to Freyberg, however, that reinforcements might be unavailable

⁵ Archives NZ, Puttick Papers, E. Puttick's talk to MPs, March 1942.

⁶ NZPD, Vol. 261, pp.66-7, 17 March 1942.

⁷ Archives NZ, EA 81/1/3, Secret Session of Parliament, 19 March 1942.

⁸ Puttick played an influential role in the decision not to return 2NZ Division to New Zealand. He considered this an 'example to whole Allied world refusing to be diverted from true strategic role by threat to Homeland and effect this example would have if British troops and people should show any reluctance to throw whole weight against Japan after defeat of Germany'. Archives NZ, Puttick Papers, Puttick to Barrowclough, 14 October 1943.

⁹ Lionel Wigmore, The Japanese Thrust, Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1957, p.449. See also Carl Bridge, 'Australia, New Zealand and Allied Grand Strategy 1941-43' in John Crawford (ed.), Kia Kaha, - New Zealand in the Second World War, Auckland: Oxford University Press 2000, pp.49-63.

¹⁰ Documents, Vol. II, No. 134, p.101, Puttick to Freyberg.

¹¹ Documents, Vol. III, No. 205, p.233

to 2NZ Division and that it might be progressively reduced. Although Fraser preferred its return to New Zealand, taking into account Roosevelt's request, 'the extreme difficulty providing the necessary shipping and the risk involved', he agreed to it being retained in the Middle East.¹²

Despite American victories at the Coral Sea and Midway in May-June 1942, the Japanese still posed a considerable threat in the South Pacific and might entrench themselves, making the liberation of captured territory very costly. In March 1942 Puttick dismissed the threat of invasion as 'unlikely'¹³ and urged the strengthening of forward bases to secure 'the Caledonia-Fiji-Samoa-Canton line, and if resources permit securing initiative by strong offensive action'. Puttick recommended New Zealand's participation to 'the fullest extent in offensive operations'¹⁴ and this was also Fraser's view.¹⁵ Fraser still contemplated 2NZ Division being returned to New Zealand, rested and deployed in the Pacific. In July 1942 Puttick was directed to discuss with Ghormley co-operation with a view to amphibious operations.¹⁶ On the basis of Puttick's advice in early August 1942, the War Cabinet approved the enlargement of 3NZ Division and this was offered to the Americans. Wellington bound itself to the ultimately untenable task of sustaining two separate divisions in different theatres.

In mid-1942 2NZ Division sustained heavy casualties and narrowly avoided annihilation. Freyberg reported that it had to be reinforced by October 1942.¹⁷ He argued that the Division was important to Allied strategy, and he was supported by Churchill.¹⁸ Fraser admitted 'we are not in a position to appreciate fully the relative claims of the Middle East and of the defence of New Zealand.'¹⁹ Fraser, despite 'the really serious question of manpower' agreed to reinforce 2NZ Division. The primacy of Commonwealth defence over local defence was reaffirmed.

¹² Documents, Vol. II, No. 57, pp.40-41, Fraser to Freyberg, 17 March 1942.

¹³ Archives NZ, EA1, 85/1/1 COS No 42, New Zealand Defence Plan, 18 March 1942.

¹⁴ Documents, Vol. III, No. 340, p.359, Puttick to Jones, 3 August 1942.

¹⁵ NZPD, Vol. 261, p.952.

¹⁶ Documents, Vol. III, No. 359, p.351, Puttick to Jones, 31 July 1942.

¹⁷ Documents, Vol. II, No. 60, p.44, Freyberg to Jones, 10 July 1942.

¹⁸ Raymond Callahan argues that Winston Churchill's political position became dependent upon a Commonwealth victory in North Africa. Raymond Callahan, Churchill and His Generals, Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2007 pp.125-126, pp.137-138. By logical extension Churchill would naturally oppose the weakening of 8th Army by the withdrawal of 2NZ Division.

¹⁹ Documents, Vol. II, No. 83, p.61, PMNZ to PMUK.

However, the reinforcement pool in New Zealand was insufficient to meet fully the needs of 2NZ Division. This was addressed by creating a tank battalion²⁰ to lessen casualties and by providing 5,500 reinforcements. Puttick warned that ‘any serious deterioration in the Pacific situation in the meantime would of course affect the whole question’.²¹ The need to reinforce 2NZ Division continued as it became involved in the battles for Egypt, but with victory at El Alamein in November, its continued presence in the Middle East seemed unnecessary. On 19 November 1942 Fraser requested its return, given the Anglo-American build-up in North Africa, the increased danger of Japanese offensives to recover the initiative and the need to ‘launch a counter-offensive at the earliest possible date.’ Fraser indicated ‘2nd NZ Division’s place should be in the Pacific’ because New Zealand’s manpower had reached ‘straining point’ and it was no longer possible to have two overseas divisions and maintain its commitments.²² Fraser believed the public felt that ‘our own tried and well trained troops should be used in the Pacific area for the defence of New Zealand.’ Churchill opposed the removal of 2NZ Division, pointing out that it was easier for American troops to move into the Pacific than Australasian troops be withdrawn from the Middle East. Shipping difficulties were paramount. It was argued that such a troop movement would cause dislocation and even hinder the creation of a Second Front.²³ Influenced by Churchill and General Marshall,²⁴ Fraser agreed to support 2NZ Division remaining in the Middle East. At a secret session of Parliament on 3 December 1942, it was decided to maintain the status quo.²⁵

²⁰ Freyberg argued for the provision of an armoured force in order to minimise casualties in 2NZ Division. But although the armour would be provided by the British the personnel had to come from New Zealand. *Documents*, Vol. II, No. 82, p.60 Freyberg to Minister of Defence, 8 August 1942. Likewise, the provision of armour to 3NZ Division was seen as a way of minimising casualties and making up for its shortages in personnel.

²¹ Archives NZ, AD12, Box 21, Secret Cables, E Puttick. Puttick to Freyberg, 16 August 1942. Puttick objected to the despatch of Valentine tanks from New Zealand to Freyberg but agreed to provide technical personnel. Puttick to Park, 9 September 1942.

²² *Documents*, Vol. II, No. 176, pp.142-4, PMNZ to PMUK, 19 November 1942.

²³ *Documents*, Vol. II, No. 178-179, pp.146-7, PMUK to PMNZ, 24 November 1942 to 2 December 1942.

²⁴ Archives NZ, AD12, Box 21 Secret Cables. E. Puttick. Nash to Fraser 5 December 1942. The combined Chiefs of Staff opposed the return of Australasian troops from the Middle East. Marshall argued it would weaken Australasian defence. Shipping was critically short and if the troops were returned it would be without their equipment. It was argued the Middle East would be weakened whilst operations were in progress.

²⁵ Michael Bassett and Michael King, *Tomorrow Comes the Song – A Life of Peter Fraser*, Auckland: Penguin Books, 2000.

However, the critical manpower shortage remained and the size of the Armed Forces peaked at 157,000 men in September 1942.²⁶ The diversion of so many men from New Zealand's agriculture and industry impacted on the economy at a time when there were increased demands for production. Isolated from its traditional source of manufactured goods, New Zealand had to develop industries, including munitions and military clothing. Manufacturing needed increased labour.²⁷ The manpower shortage²⁸ became a political issue in September when the Opposition withdrew from the War Administration over the issue of striking miners. In October they moved a vote of no confidence in Fraser's Government, arguing that 'we are trying to do too much'.²⁹ In December Fraser confided to Parliament that 'obviously we have not sufficient manpower in New Zealand to maintain two divisions overseas, three divisions in New Zealand, and at the same time meet New Zealand's growing industrial requirements'.³⁰ In the manpower debate in March 1943, the Opposition criticised the over-commitment, but with the exception of John A Lee, they would not commit themselves to calling for the withdrawal of an overseas division.³¹ Fraser was wary of a Japanese resurgence. He recognised that New Zealand was a Pacific nation and that it was 'of overwhelming importance' that New Zealand should not be accused of shirking its responsibilities in the Pacific.³² The decision to expand 3NZ Division to 17,637 men taken by War Cabinet on 6 March 1943 is a manifestation of this.³³ There was general parliamentary support for a Pacific focus but the needs of 2NZ Division could not be ignored. At the end of the manpower debate Fraser commented that 'we must take a share in the Pacific Battle and we must keep the division for the time being in the very stern battle for Tunisia'.³⁴

With the end of the Tunisian Campaign, Churchill pressed for 2NZ Division to be used in the invasion of Sicily. However, Fraser had promised Parliament in November 1942

²⁶ J.V.T. Baker, War Economy, Wellington: Government Printer, 1965, p.81.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.191.

²⁸ Archives NZ, AD12, Box 21, Secret Cables – E Puttick. Puttick's view was that there were 41,000 grade A men who have never served... 'I therefore consider we can maintain two divisions but even if I am wrong I consider present situation requires two divisions abroad and acceptance of possibility of failure to maintain them later on'. Puttick to Park, 4 December 1942.

²⁹ NZPD, Volume 261, p.637, 14 October 1942.

³⁰ Archives NZ, EA 81/1/3, Secret Session, 3 December 1942.

³¹ NZPD, Volume 262, p.460, 17 March 1943.

³² NZPD, Volume 262, p.496, 18 March 1943.

³³ Documents, Volume III, No. 352, p.376.

³⁴ NZPD, Volume 262, p.502, 18 March 1943.

to consult it regarding the future of 2NZ Division and he declined to commit it without parliamentary consultations. Eventually the British proceeded without 2NZ Division.³⁵ Fraser confided to Freyberg - 'the simple fact is that we no longer have the Grade A men to maintain two divisions abroad, and within a few months the question must be determined which division is to be used to reinforce the other'.³⁶ He told Churchill the same thing. Fraser warned that there was likely to be division in Parliament and urged Churchill to make an appeal on symbolic, historical and military grounds for the retention of 2NZ Division. He also suggested that Roosevelt be associated with the appeal. Although Fraser had swung towards the European commitment, he also stressed the importance for the post-war world of British participation in the Pacific War.³⁷ This duality of position would prolong the life of 3NZ Division. Churchill duly despatched an impassioned plea for the retention of 2NZ Division, also indicating that Roosevelt supported him.³⁸ Again, shortage of shipping was cited as the key reason to leave the division in place.³⁹ Freyberg also supported this.⁴⁰

Meanwhile arrangements had been made for the return to New Zealand of long-serving members of 2NZ Division. This 'furlough scheme' had a huge impact.⁴¹ The sudden need to find 9,000 replacements triggered a crisis, with the Director of National Service declaring that replacements were simply not available.⁴² The only viable source of manpower was 3NZ Division. The War Cabinet had approved a Maori Battalion for it, but that battalion now had to be used as reinforcements for 28 Maori Battalion.⁴³ Maori sentiment was averse to deployment in the Pacific⁴⁴.

³⁵ Documents, Volume II, No. 216, pp.185-6, PMNZ to PMUK, 19 April 1943.

³⁶ Documents, Volume II, No. 226, pp.195-6, PM to Freyberg, 7 May 1943.

³⁷ Documents, Vol. II, No. 222, pp.189-90.

³⁸ Documents, Vol. II, No. 223, p.191, PMUK to PMNZ, 3 May 1943.

³⁹ There was always a shortage of shipping due to Axis attacks and the need to transport and supply troops for D-Day. The vast distances of the Pacific strained shipping resources. New Zealand's maritime resources were slender and concentrated on the coastal trade and supplying Britain. Consequently, 3NZ Division was virtually dependant upon the Americans for its shipping needs.

⁴⁰ Documents, Vol. II, No. 230, pp.200-1.

⁴¹ McIntosh considered that 'the factor which decided the issue was ... the return of the 6,000 men of the first three echelons.' McIntosh Papers, McIntosh to Berendsen, 26 May 1943.

⁴² Documents, Vol. II, p.196. footnote

⁴³ Documents, Vol. III, p.375 footnote.

⁴⁴ Archives NZ, AD 12, 28/15/1, P.K. Paieka, Chairman, Maori War Effort Committee to Acting Minister of Defence, 5 March 1943.

A senior civil servant observed that Fraser's 'personal position is both difficult and delicate. In the first place he does not know which is the right thing to do - to sacrifice the Pacific Division or the Middle East Division - because clearly we cannot maintain both plus this Frankenstein of an air force and the semblance of a home defence force, the maintenance of which is dictated by Politics'. He also noted the 'division in the War Cabinet, probably four-fifths opposition in Cabinet and an equal proportion of opponents in Caucus when it comes to leaving the division in the Middle East.' However, opinion in the War Cabinet 'veered around to the retention of the division in the Middle East'.⁴⁵

Fraser was well aware of the strong feeling in Canberra that New Zealand troops should return to the Pacific. Australia was supplying New Zealand with munitions and Curtin resented New Zealand troops remaining in the Middle East. The fear was that 'if 2NZ Division was retained in the Middle East then the Australians would perceive that Wellington was taking its share of responsibilities in the Pacific too lightly.'⁴⁶

Fraser discussed the fate of the divisions in both the War Cabinet and the Cabinet without resolution, and he referred the matter to Parliament in secret session on 20-21 May 1943. The options were to disband one division or to let both shrink in size. Fraser highlighted the desperate manpower situation, the small number of Grade I men available and the needs of agriculture and industry. He compared 2NZ Division with 3NZ Division and highlighted the former's combat experience and the wastage of manpower and training if it were transferred to the Pacific. If 3NZ Division was to be reinforced this would require the mobilisation of all remaining Grade 1 men, but if 3NZ Division were reduced, both divisions could be maintained together with RNZAF and RNZN needs. He again argued that difficulties with the shipping of 2NZ Division to the Pacific were a major consideration, and suggested that by the time it reached the Pacific it might be restricted to a garrison role. Fraser also emphasised British goodwill and the benefits that would flow from it in the post-war settlement.⁴⁷ He was concerned at the political consequences of turning down Churchill's plea to retain 2NZ

⁴⁵ McIntosh Papers, McIntosh to Stevens, 14 May 1943.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Archives NZ EA 81/1/3, Fraser's Notes on Secret Session of NZ Parliament 20-21 May 1943.

Division in Europe.⁴⁸ The outcome of the Secret Session was anti-climatic. The debate was brief and only six or seven MPs argued in favour of the return of 2NZ division. No vote was taken.⁴⁹ McIntosh believed 'the result was entirely due to the Prime Minister's skill. His own mind was not made up until the very last moment and I believe it was not until he saw which way his own Cabinet reacted that he did decide upon his final course.'⁵⁰

In terms of maintaining a significant contribution in the Pacific, New Zealand had already developed an alternative to 3NZ Division in the form of the RNZAF squadrons and, to a lesser extent, naval units.⁵¹ Indeed the rapid expansion of the RNZAF during 1942 and 1943 to 17½ squadrons for the Pacific contributed greatly to the manpower crisis of mid-1943.⁵² Between September 1942 and September 1943 the RNZAF's strength in the Pacific rose from 1,341 to 3,667 (while personnel in New Zealand went from 19,300 to 30,700).⁵³ Puttick acknowledged that men were to be withdrawn from 3NZ Division 'For Air Force which Army must assist in its large expansion'.⁵⁴ That expansion was based on the agreement from Admiral King in August 1942 for 500 aircraft to be supplied to the RNZAF from USN stocks.⁵⁵ Hence it was equipped with US-designed aircraft, albeit sometimes of obsolete design - P40 War Hawks, Corsairs, Avengers, Dauntlesses and Catalinas. The fuel, munitions and equipment were all inter-operable with US air units, posing far fewer logistical problems than the almost entirely British-equipped 3NZ Division. Furthermore, one of the strategic advantages of air units is their mobility. With the caveat that they need ground crew and logistical support, it is easier to deploy aircraft from airfield to airfield than to ship soldiers with

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Documents, Vol. II, No. 240, p.215, PMNZ to HCNZ, Canberra, 22 May 1943.

⁵⁰ McIntosh Papers, McIntosh to Berendsen, 26 May 1943.

⁵¹ HMNZS Leander was operating in the Solomons in May 1943 and was to be joined by HMNZS Achilles. The RNZN also had mine layers in the Solomons and would later deploy New Zealand made Fairmile MTBs. The mobility of warships made them strategically flexible but they needed to be grouped together for their protection and effectiveness. Until the formation of the British Pacific Fleet RNZN units in the South Pacific generally operated under American command.

⁵² See R.V. Goddard's letter of complaint to Fraser that 3NZ Division was to engage in active operations as this would likely result in 'a reduction of the number of men available for the Air Force'. He hoped for a continuation of 'the development of the Air Force if necessary at the expense of the 3rd Division'. Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15 R.V. Goddard to Fraser, 15 July 1943.

⁵³ Brian Hewson, 'Goliath's Apprentice', unpublished manuscript, p.61. Author's Collection. The RNZAF 'required more fit men than could be supplied from civilian sources and arrangements were begun to transfer men from the Army. The RNZAF's manpower policy and situation would cause tension between these two forces as well as public controversy throughout the rest of the war', p.61.

⁵⁴ Archives NZ, AD12, Unnumbered Papers, Box 21, Puttick to NZLO, 11 June 1943.

⁵⁵ Hewson, p.63.

their associated impedimenta.⁵⁶ Puttick⁵⁷ made this point to the New Zealand Liaison Office in London – ‘Air effort in Pacific more beneficial than Army because less danger to shipping in transporting to active theatre probably sufficient Army in sight up to limit able to transport but never too much air’.⁵⁸ Finally, with only 4696 Air Force and 404 Navy personnel in the Pacific on 31 December 1943, the immediate cost of those commitments in manpower was significantly less than the 19,649 in 3NZ Division.⁵⁹ Much more labour for the Home Front could be released by running down or disbanding the latter. In his talks with Rear-Admiral Shafroth in Noumea in December 1943,⁶⁰ Nash confirmed that the New Zealand Government saw its air commitment to the South Pacific as its first priority, followed by the naval commitment and food production for the Allied forces.⁶¹

Exacerbating matters, the British requested more agricultural products⁶² whilst the American forces in New Zealand and the South Pacific also increased their demands under reciprocal lend lease.⁶³ As their numbers grew, so too did their dependence on New Zealand. Wellington found itself under increasing criticism from the Americans

⁵⁶ Air power offered advantages. Firstly, it was cheap in terms of cost in both money and lives. Aircraft were relatively cheap and had been obtained under lend lease. The risk in lives from combat losses was correspondingly less than that of the Army. If the squadron got wiped out it would have been unfortunate but if a battalion had been wiped out it would have been a disaster of first-rate proportions. Secondly, it is arguable that an air unit offered the Americans greater offensive and defensive capability than a ground unit, with the caveat that air units still had to be protected by ground units. Thirdly, land forces would have a greater sickness wastage rate than their air force compatriots. Archives NZ, Puttick Papers, Puttick to Barrowclough, 14 October 1943.

⁵⁷ Curiously for an Army Commander Puttick was very air-minded. By 1943 Puttick strongly preferred New Zealand air power to land forces in the South Pacific because, ‘there couldn’t be too much air for this Island work’, ‘land forces had to be conveyed over the last 100 most dangerous miles before they had any real value, whereas, air did not, hence conservancy of shipping’, sufficient American land forces should be available for operations, land forces would have greater sickness wastage than air, and in the event of a serious setback New Zealand air units ‘could fly back quickly to New Zealand and if developed to a level of 20 Squadrons would provide a formidable defence capability freeing up men and equipment for other theatres. Archives NZ, Puttick Papers, Puttick to Barrowclough 14 October 1943. See also Dominion, 22 September 1944 ‘New Zealand Policy in Pacific’.

⁵⁸ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, Unnumbered papers, Box 21, Puttick to NZLO, 11 June 1943.

⁵⁹ Archives NZ, AD Series 12, 28/5 CCS 499 26 February 1944, Appendix A.

⁶⁰ Archives NZ, AD 28/15/1, Memo of Discussions, US Personnel with Walter Nash, 30 December 1943.

⁶¹ This reflected the American preference as expressed by Admiral T.S. Wilkinson in early June 1943 who rated New Zealand’s Pacific commitments in terms of Air Force, Navy, and lastly, Army. Ian McGibbon (ed.), Undiplomatic Dialogue - letters between Carl Berendsen and Alistair McIntosh 1943-52, Wellington: Reed Publishers, 198, p.27.

⁶² As the war progressed the British perceived that American forces in the South Pacific ‘with their high calorific consumption level per capita, were competitors with Britain for supplies of Australian and New Zealand meat. Christopher Thorne, Allies of a Kind - The United States, Britain and the War Against Japan, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1978. CAB 14, March 1945, CAB 65/49.

⁶³ Documents, Volume II, No. 226, pp.195-6, PM to Freyberg

that its war effort was misdirected in that it had a tremendous army in proportion to its population but vital industries were under-utilised due to lack of labour. It was felt 'that New Zealand's contribution to the war should be economic rather than military' and that although New Zealand was supplying food to American forces 'the present contribution is minor indeed when compared to the Dominion's potentialities'. It was noted that New Zealand had been requested to supply twenty-five million pounds of evaporated milk but had only been able to promise seven million pounds.⁶⁴ It did not help that American requests for food supplied escalated dramatically from supplies for 200,000 men in February 1943 to a potential 500,000 in July 1943. This shocked Fraser, who pointed out the acute manpower shortage and that it was 'incumbent on those in charge of the United Nations war effort to give New Zealand a lead, i.e., which is the United Nations' more urgent need, men or supplies'.⁶⁵ American dissatisfaction grew to the point where it was suggested that New Zealand be punished for its 'failure to do their utmost in producing vegetables for our troops in that area' and that 'to begin with, we will disapprove all "borderline" requisitions, in contrast to our former liberal policy with New Zealand and ask that all requirements not patently necessary for the prosecution of the war be purchased for cash'.⁶⁶ The American Charge d'Affaires cautioned that this 'would cause indignation and bitterness and defeat its own purpose'.⁶⁷ In June 1943 Puttick warned that 'the seasonal demand for labour will be particularly difficult this year.' He considered that 12,000 men were required for harvesting and 18,000 for food processing industries. He recorded 'the PM has emphasised that the harvest must be gathered, regardless of anything else.'⁶⁸ Dairy production reached its nadir for a decade and meat production was also significantly down.⁶⁹ A crisis was looming.

⁶⁴ NARA, Despatch No. 618, 22 June 1943, Relations between New Zealand Government and South Pacific Command. Food Requirements for 1943-44. Roy Kimmel, Outgoing Head of US Lend Lease Mission to NZ to Mr E.R. Stettinius.

⁶⁵ Ibid., No. 716, Raymond E. Cox to The Secretary of State, 4 August 1943.

⁶⁶ Ibid., Blackwell Smith, Head of Lend Lease Mission in New Zealand to Knollenberg 16 October 1943.

⁶⁷ Ibid., No. 555 Cox to Secretary of State, 10 November 1943.

⁶⁸ Archives NZ, Puttick Papers, Manpower Situation, 6 June 1943.

⁶⁹ J.V.T. Baker, War Economy, Wellington: Internal Affairs, 1965, p.490.

Wellington struggled to cope by reducing its Home Defence forces,⁷⁰ but this was insufficient. But for Barrowclough's involvement of 3NZ Division in combat operations in late 1943 it would probably have been reduced. In December Nash cabled Halsey that there was 'a most serious crisis, particularly in regard to the production of foodstuffs.'⁷¹ Nash noted that unless 'men in the Pacific can be made available for employment in the freezing works before the peak of the season in January, it will not be possible to fulfil the commitments in respect of meat either for the United States Forces in the Pacific or for the urgent needs of the United Kingdom.' Nash asked for the release of garrison troops on Tonga and Fiji and for shipping to be made available. In discussions with Rear Admiral Shafroth in Noumea a few weeks later, he stated that New Zealand gave food production for Allied forces priority over the maintenance of its ground forces in the Pacific, and additional personnel were required for freezing works.⁷²

However, there was strong support for the primacy of 3NZ Division in Wellington as well. Carl Berendsen, the Secretary to the War Cabinet and from March 1943 New Zealand's High Commissioner to Australia, considered that New Zealand troops should have returned to the Pacific even though the threat to New Zealand had evaporated. He thought that 'our Forces should be fighting in our own geographic area where our post war interests would be'. Barrowclough's arguments for concentration on the Pacific 'carried considerable weight with Fraser,⁷³ who on the whole considered 'it was preferable for our main effort to be in the Pacific theatre'. As Chief of General Staff, Puttick viewed 3NZ Division as simply filling the gap until American forces could arrive.⁷⁴ In the early years of the Pacific War he considered that 'NZ's Armed Forces, being more or less on the spot, are of very special value during this period, much more

⁷⁰ Archives NZ, AD12, Box 21, Secret Cables, E. Puttick, 11 June 1943. Puttick lamented to Brigadier Park 'on 8 March last (1942) I recommended Home Forces should revert to non-mobilised basis... Cabinet considered this premature and adopted interim scheme. Since then manpower situation has deteriorated due to increasing demands for primary and other production, expansion of Air force to 17 ½ Squadrons for Pacific and decision by Parliament that 6,000 long service men of 2 Division be granted 3 months furlough here.

⁷¹ Documents, Vol. III, No. 414, p.430 Nash to Halsey, 4 December 1943.

⁷² Archives NZ, AD 28/15/1, Memo of Discussions US Personnel with Walter Nash, 30 December 1943.

⁷³ F.T. Henderson, Berendsen Interview, 1970, unpublished, p.17.

⁷⁴ 'In providing a third division and certain garrisons New Zealand filled a gap till the United States forces could be deployed and it was hoped that the sequence of events in the Pacific might make these forces unnecessary or of considerably less importance by the time manpower difficulties had become really acute'. Dominion, 22 September 1944 New Zealand Policy in Pacific, Distribution of Forces, Comment by General Puttick.

so than when in the future larger forces are available from other sources.’⁷⁵ Later Puttick admitted ‘we gambled a bit on the operational timetable, hoping by the time the manpower situation became critical, operations in the South Pacific might be over’.⁷⁶ That gamble had paid off, but had been complicated by Fraser’s desire for 3NZ Division to take part in offensive operations.

By keeping 3NZ Division under strength and using Home Defence forces for reinforcements, Wellington was able to keep both divisions in the field during 1943. However, in August Barrowclough and the Americans were told that 3NZ Division would be receiving no further reinforcements and only limited replacements.⁷⁷ In response to Halsey’s protestations about the inadequate manning of 3NZ Division, Fraser told him that once the reinforcement pool for 2NZ division had been exhausted in New Zealand, reinforcements would be drawn from the South Pacific.⁷⁸ In late December 1943 Nash had discussions with senior American commanders in Noumea. Wilkinson in particular pointed out that he understood from his conference in Wellington that New Zealand had committed itself to maintaining two brigades in the Pacific together with reinforcements. Nash advised him that it was impossible for New Zealand to supply reinforcements or replacements.⁷⁹ Matters progressively worsened as 2NZ Division became involved in the Italian Campaign. The Battle for the Sangro River and Orsogna between 12 November 1943 and 10 April 1944 resulted in 1,507 casualties,⁸⁰ who had to be replaced to maintain combat efficiency. From February to April 1944 2NZ Division became involved in costly operations at Cassino.⁸¹

Nash was directed by Fraser to sound out Roosevelt and Churchill on the question of whether the Pacific or Europe should be given priority.⁸² Clarity was not forthcoming.

⁷⁵ Archives NZ, Puttick Papers, Observations On Current Army Problems, 24 February 1943.

⁷⁶ Archives NZ, Puttick Papers, Puttick to Barker, 30 December 1943.

⁷⁷ Archives NZ, AD 12/28/15,1 - Part 4, Operation Kiwi, Salmon to Halsey, 20 August 1943. Provision had been made for 2,000 reinforcements for 3NZ Division and ‘no further provision can be made’.

⁷⁸ Documents, Vol. III, No. 389, pp.404-5, PMNZ to Halsey, 30 August 1943.

⁷⁹ Archives NZ, EA 87/21/1 Memorandum regarding discussions with the Hon. Walter Nash, New Zealand Minister to Washington, at Noumea on 30 December 1943. SOPAC. Rear Admiral Shafroth pointed out that Halsey’s priority was firstly to maintain the RNZAF at 17 Squadrons, secondly retain the military forces in the SOPAC area, thirdly to maintain naval forces and last priority was to provide food supplies.

⁸⁰ N.C. Phillips, The Sangro to Cassino, Wellington: War History Branch, 1957, Appendix 1, p.355.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, Appendix II, p.356.

⁸² Documents, Vol. II, No. 358, p.328.

On 14 January 1944 Roosevelt favoured New Zealand concentrating its efforts in the Pacific and thought New Zealand would be better represented at the entry into Tokyo rather than Berlin.⁸³ On 2 February 1944 Roosevelt suggested the issue be referred to the Combined Chiefs of Staff.⁸⁴

Meanwhile Churchill resisted the withdrawal of 2NZ Division, suggesting that 2NZ Division should be represented by at least a brigade group at the fall of Rome.⁸⁵ However, a difficulty with downsizing 2NZ Division to brigade level was that it threatened loss of New Zealand control of the unit and influence on the course of operations, something that both Fraser and Freyberg had long adamantly opposed.

There was an additional, albeit covert, reason why Wellington should prefer to have its soldiers growing pumpkins rather than fighting - the cost of the United States-New Zealand Mutual Aid Agreement (or 'Lend Lease') signed on 3 September 1942. As American aircraft were supplied to the RNZAF the cost to New Zealand skyrocketed. The possibility that at the end of the war New Zealand would face a huge bill 'was a cause of much concern to the New Zealand Government'. One way of offsetting the nightmare of potentially owing the United States £40-50 million⁸⁶ was to supply American forces in the South Pacific with 'Reciprocal Aid' in the form of food.

Barrowclough vigorously resisted the destruction of his command, pointing out that 'it will be impossible to withdraw the Division before the end of June (1944) as it will be actually engaged with the enemy and I do not see any other Divisions in this theatre in the near future who could undertake our relief'. He then pointed out that to ask for the relief of the Division 'before the end of June would considerably embarrass Admiral Halsey'. Barrowclough thought that Wellington supported his Division and that these arguments 'would strengthen the Government's hand'.⁸⁷

Puttick told the Government that 'practically all considerations on the military side are strongly in favour of the retention of 2nd Division overseas' whilst political

⁸³ Documents, Vol. II, 359, p.329 Nash to PMNZ 14 January 1944.

⁸⁴ Documents, Vol. II, 366, p.336 Nash to PMNZ

⁸⁵ Documents, Vol. II, 367, p.337.

⁸⁶ Archives NZ Air 118/81f The Defence of the Pacific 1942, pp.194-202.

⁸⁷ Archives NZ WAI, 9, S1 Barrowclough to Puttick, 2 February 1944.

considerations 'on the short view at least, favour the retention overseas of the 3rd Division'.⁸⁸ He stated that whether New Zealand's war effort should be concentrated on production instead was a policy question for the Government. Puttick then traversed the relative importance of the European and Pacific theatres and concluded that the European theatre was of 'predominant strategical importance, and consequently the fullest possible concentration should be made there to defeat Germany at the earliest possible date.' He saw the Pacific as offering 'no prospects of quick success, and requiring a heavy manpower commitment so that the loss of one division was inconsequential. Puttick weighed the political consequences and touched on the potential adverse reaction from Australia and the United States to the withdrawal of 3NZ Division. He discounted this by saying that Wellington could point to its record in the Pacific and the possibility that on the defeat of Germany a division could be provided for the Pacific. Finally, he examined present and pending operations and concluded that tactical developments rendered the withdrawal of 2NZ Division relatively more serious. He considered the shipping factor, pointing out that 2NZ Division was double the strength of 3NZ Division, at five times the distance from New Zealand and there was practically no spare shipping available. In contrast, shipping 3NZ Division to New Zealand was 'much easier'. Furthermore, 3NZ Division was likely to return to New Zealand more quickly than its sister division. Climate, relief and casualties were considered. Puttick contrasted the 'healthy climate' of 2NZ Division with the 'oppressive' tropical climate of the Pacific and the likely 'serious legacy of post-war ill-health.' He considered that if the troops of 3NZ Division were retired to rear areas for relief this would 'lead to insistent demands for leave in New Zealand.' He also argued that soldiers in 2NZ Division 'would almost certainly refuse to proceed to 3rd Division' but that the reverse would not apply. He firmly rejected the temporary return of either division as this would render it unfit for combat and require at least six months to reorganise and re-train. Puttick therefore recommended that 2NZ Division be retained abroad and that 3NZ Division be returned to New Zealand. He indicated that this was endorsed by the New Zealand Chiefs of Staff. Puttick structured his arguments to favour 2NZ Division, but given his knowledge of wartime conditions and

⁸⁸ Archives NZ, Puttick Papers, Appreciation Of the Problem of the Withdrawal of One or Other of the 2nd or 3rd NZ Divisions, Puttick to PMNZ, 19 February 1944. Also Appendix VII, The Pacific, pp.346-352.

the likely progress of the war against Japan, his conclusions are reasonable.⁸⁹ He was correct in identifying 3NZ Division's continued existence with inter-Allied political considerations. The 'Appreciation' was made available to Parliament at a secret session.⁹⁰

Puttick reiterated his views in a subsequent memo.⁹¹ He traversed the New Zealand Army's commitments, highlighting the problems of shipping 2NZ Division home ('this movement would probably be slow, leading to the NZ troops being held in base camps overseas for a lengthy period, thus causing discontent and waste of manpower resources'), manpower wastage ('it would take six months to return 2NZ Division to New Zealand with a consequent loss of manpower resources to either the fighting or production forces') and sentiment ('bitterness amongst the troops and NZ public at 2NZ Division being deprived of the spectacular and easy final stages of the campaign').

Furthermore, Britain's food requirements soared as preparations were made for D-Day.⁹² In February 1944, British Minister of Food Llewellyn informed Nash that 'if New Zealand's production declines below the present level I do not see how we can possibly maintain our present standards of feeding in this country'. He indicated that Cabinet's opinion was that civilian rations were incapable of reduction and that service rations would have to be reduced.⁹³

The secret session of Parliament was adjourned to await the recommendation of the British Chiefs of Staff. This was communicated on 29 February 1944 via Nash. They advised that 3NZ Division should be withdrawn temporarily from the South Pacific with a view to 2NZ Division being withdrawn from Europe later to complete a full division for operations in the Pacific in 1945.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ In the aftermath of D-Day, both British and American forces suffered an acute shortage of trained combat soldiers. Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World at Arms*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p.762. The withdrawal of 2NZ Division from the Italian Campaign would have caused difficulties for Clark and Alexander. However, Italy by mid-1944 was a side show tying down more Allied than Axis troops.

⁹⁰ Archives NZ Puttick Papers. Puttick to PM NZ, 19 February 1944.

⁹¹ Archives NZ Puttick Papers, Withdrawal of Overseas Forces, Puttick to PM, 29 February 1944.

⁹² By May 1944 almost two million men were in England preparing to invade France. Stephen Ambrose *D-Day, June 6, 1944*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994, p.151. These troops had to be fed. They placed strain on transport networks and land for their bases and training areas.

⁹³ Baker, pp.490-1.

⁹⁴ Archives NZ, EA1 59/2/124, Nash to Minister of External Affairs, 1 March 1944.

We realise the importance which the New Zealand Government attaches to New Zealand forces playing their full part in the Pacific War. We suggest, however, that there will be ample scope for the employment there of a New Zealand Division in 1945, and that in the meanwhile New Zealand can well be represented in that theatre by her Navy and Air Force.⁹⁵

They viewed operations in the Solomons as being secondary to those in Italy. Furthermore, the withdrawal of 3NZ Division would not impose the acute shipping problems that withdrawal of 2NZ Division would.⁹⁶ They were clearly attempting to have it both ways – the continued involvement of 2NZ Division in the European war and the continued existence of 3NZ Division in cadre form to be fleshed out for later operations with British forces in the Pacific.

Nash had also received the views of the US Chiefs of Staff which, whilst concurring in the British recommendation, had certain reservations - that numbers be ascertained and withdrawals be from the New Zealand Army forces in the South West Pacific⁹⁷ rather than from 3NZ Division. Moreover, Wellington and COMSOPAC should confer and jointly determine the units affected and that the withdrawals should not be made prior to the completion of Forearm and Merchantile.⁹⁸

Parliament decided that 11,000 men from 3NZ Division should be returned to New Zealand by October 1944. This effectively dealt a death blow to the Division because it constituted over half its strength. But the demise was not a clean one – in line with the suggestion from the British Chiefs of Staff, a cadre was retained on New Caledonia.⁹⁹ This cadre was to be ‘a nucleus for a reconstituted division which was hoped could be provided for operations in the Pacific in 1945.’¹⁰⁰

⁹⁵ Archives NZ, AD 12, 28/5, COS 449, Appendix B, 26 February 1944.

⁹⁶ Puttick commented that the recommendation of the British Chiefs of Staff, so closely correspond to mine, both as regards the factors included and the conclusions reached, that I wouldn't be surprised if some people thought we were in collusion. Archives NZ, Puttick Papers, Puttick to Barrowclough, 15 March 1944.

⁹⁷ This reference to the 'South West Pacific' betrays the astonishing ignorance of the US Chiefs of Staff as to the location of New Zealand land forces in the South Pacific Area. Did they confuse the New Zealanders with the Australians or was it simply a typographical error?

⁹⁸ Archives NZ, AD12, 28/5 COS 449, Appendix B, 26 February 1945; Forearm referred to Kavieng, New Ireland and Merchantile referred to Manus Island in the Admiralty Group. Christopher Chant, The Encyclopaedia of Code Names of World War II, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984, pp.55, 132.

⁹⁹ Documents, Vol II, No 376, p 344. PMNZ to Nash, 1 April 1944.

¹⁰⁰ War Cabinet Minute, cited in Lissington, p.65.

The possibility that the Division might have remained intact could have been heightened if it had enjoyed unequivocal American support. When Nash met with Shafroth in Noumea on 30 December 1943, the Admiral referred to Halsey's expectations and disappointments on learning of the two-brigade structure, and stated that Halsey's policy regarding New Zealand's contribution was firstly to maintain the RNZAF at a level of 17 squadrons, secondly, to retain military forces in the South Pacific area, thirdly, to maintain naval forces in the area, and, fourthly, to provide maximum food supplies. Moreover, as the war in the Pacific moved northward, the Joint Staff Planners recommended that Army troops in the South Pacific should pass to the control of MacArthur's South West Pacific Area. 3NZ Division was included, although Admiral Bieri pointed out that the permission of the New Zealand Government was necessary.¹⁰¹ It was unclear what MacArthur was intended to do with these 'army' forces and the proposal appears to have exemplified American inter-service rivalry.

However, American enthusiasm for New Zealand involvement in the Pacific was severely cooled by the Canberra Pact. Following the Cairo Conference in late 1943 both Australian and New Zealand leaders began to feel isolated from Allied strategic decision making, particularly in regard to the post-war world. They decided to assert Australasian rights to a voice in matters affecting the South Pacific and South West Pacific.¹⁰² The Australia-New Zealand Agreement, known as the Canberra Pact, was signed on 21 January 1944 and created governmental machinery for consultation and co-operation in the areas of defence and foreign policy.

The United States reaction was irritation.¹⁰³ at what was described by the US Minister in Canberra as 'the ANZAC Monroe Doctrine'.¹⁰⁴ According to Ian McGibbon, 'riled by the ANZAC Agreement, Washington determined to minimise New Zealand or

¹⁰¹ NARA, JPS 391/4 16 March 1944, Redeployment of Forces in the Pacific following Operation Hollandia.

¹⁰² The Rt. Hon. J Curtin, The Defence of the Southwest Pacific Region, Melbourne: Government Printer, 1944. Statement 18 January 1944.

¹⁰³ McIntosh Papers, A9/44/001. Conversation on United States Relations with New Zealand, 20 April 1944.

¹⁰⁴ Thorne, p.485.

Australian participation, outside their immediate areas.’¹⁰⁵ Whereas previously the Americans, faced with a manpower shortage in the Pacific, had been keen to utilise New Zealand troops, the prevailing attitude from Washington became one of not wanting them to be employed in the Central Pacific Drive. This effectively relegated 3NZ Division to either a mopping up or a garrison role under American command, or use under British command elsewhere in the world.

Roosevelt and the US Joint Chiefs of Staff certainly found the Canberra Pact objectionable.¹⁰⁶ In particular, they rejected the Australasian claim for a major role in the future of the Mandated Islands.¹⁰⁷ The Americans saw the islands as essential to American security¹⁰⁸ and considered that Australia and New Zealand were not capable of defending them against a ‘militant Asia’. The US Navy Secretary Knox maintained that since the islands were Japanese territory, as soon as they were captured by American forces they belonged to the United States. There was very firm military opposition to the concept that the Mandated Islands could continue under a trusteeship.¹⁰⁹

New Zealand lost its most valuable patron in Washington, Admiral King. King was annoyed by the Canberra Pact and in May 1944 told Group Captain Spencer, RNZAF, that ‘On his own responsibility he had taken the decision that he would not give either NZ or Australia any claim to interest themselves in the Japanese Mandated Islands and that this position might arise at a later date if their forces were employed in the

¹⁰⁵ Ian McGibbon, New Zealand and the Second World War, Auckland: Hodder Moa Beckett, 2003, p.198-199.

¹⁰⁶ The American perception of the Pact as being anti-American was not without foundation. Evatt privately described it as having been ‘prompted above all by apprehension over American expansionistic tendencies in the South Pacific’. Thorne, p.482.

¹⁰⁷ NARA PG218, JCS Central Decimal Files, Box 31, File CCS 092.2, JCS 698/1, 4 March 1944, Australia-New Zealand Agreement of 21 January 1944 Report by the Joint Strategic Survey Committee. This report focused on the importance of the Japanese Mandated Islands to the security of the United States and the inability of the Australasians to ensure even their own defence.

¹⁰⁸ The Joint Chiefs of Staff identified a defence perimeter for America in the post-war world on 15 March 1943. The Canberra Pact conflicted with that view. The JCS’ sought control over territories controlled by Wellington, including Western Samoa. This was resisted by the State Department. In the post war period Wellington and Canberra resisted American attempts to impose sovereignty. W. David McIntyre, Background to the ANZUS Pact - Policy - Making, Strategy and Diplomacy 1945-55, Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 1995, pp.66-77.

¹⁰⁹ Mark A Stoler; Allies and Adversaries - The Joint Chiefs of Staff, The Grand Alliance and US Strategy in World War II, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000, pp.176-182.

islands.’¹¹⁰ Nash talked with King and reported that his views ‘are due to his strong resentment to clause 26¹¹¹ in the Canberra Agreement.’¹¹² King was the Naval Chief of Staff and a very powerful member of Roosevelt’s administration. He was a strong personality and not one to be crossed.¹¹³ After the war Sir Leonard Isitt commented:

We did have some trouble with Admiral King which can be laid at the door of the Australian/New Zealand pact which was very badly worded and very badly publicised and gave to Admiral King and many senior officers in Washington a very definite opinion, right or wrong, that Australia and New Zealand were getting together to resist any American entry into the Pacific.¹¹⁴

Fraser attempted to smooth things by instructing Nash to explain to King that Wellington had no objections to Washington’s claims in the Mandated Territories.¹¹⁵ However, King remained adamant that RNZAF Squadrons, which he had played a considerable role in equipping with American aircraft, would not be used in the Central Pacific. By extension, King would not have welcomed New Zealand land force involvement in the battles for the Central and Northern Pacific.

The official historian of the American-New Zealand relationship argues that the Canberra Pact had no long-term effect on New Zealand-American relations because Canberra was held mainly responsible and ‘New Zealand in the past had been an accommodating ally’. She maintains that ‘American resentment of New Zealand’s part in the agreement soon faded and the accord that had characterised the relationship between the two parties since Pearl Harbor was restored.’¹¹⁶ However, American resentment at Wellington’s assertiveness in Pacific affairs did have an impact on American plans for the deployment of New Zealand forces. If the Americans had

¹¹⁰ Archives NZ, Air, H3/3/3, Group Captain Spencer to Chief of Air Staff, 11 May 1944.

¹¹¹ ‘The two Governments declare that the interim administration and ultimate disposal of enemy territories in the Pacific are of vital importance to Australia and New Zealand and that any such disposal should be effected only with their agreement and as part of a general Pacific settlement.’ Australian-New Zealand Agreement Treaty Series 1944, No. 1, 21 January 1944, Article 26.

¹¹² Archives NZ, EA 87/4/5, Part 1, Nash to PMNZ, 17 May 1944.

¹¹³ Isitt described how he ‘sent a Staff Officer to see King and find out just what was upsetting him. King made it clear that he objected strongly to the Canberra Pact. He told my officer ‘If you want to play politics with your big brother, that is your business - but don’t expect United States blood to be spilled for your ends. I for one, will see that you are no part of American forces in the fight against Japan.’ J.T. Henderson, Isitt Interview, p.8.

¹¹⁴ Archives NZ, Air H3/15/4, Issitt to Kippenberger, 7 November 1947.

¹¹⁵ Archives NZ, EA 153/20/4, Part 1, PMNZ to NZ Minister in Washington, 18 May 1944.

¹¹⁶ M.P.Lissington, *New Zealand and the United States 1840-1944*, Wellington: Government Printer, 1972, p.97.

stated strongly to Wellington that they required 3NZ Division for combat operations in the Central Pacific, this might have swayed the New Zealand Government in favour of retaining 3NZ Division, but at a key moment New Zealand forces had fallen out of favour with Washington.

Yet the attitudes of American operational commanders in the South Pacific to 3NZ Division were generally favourable. Halsey and Wilkinson had been especially complimentary about its combat abilities.¹¹⁷ Harmon favoured 3NZ Division. Future combat operations, including an assault on Kavieng, had been planned.¹¹⁸ Operational commanders could see the usefulness of an amphibiously trained, experienced unit. Halsey had no hesitation in using New Zealand forces and RNZAF commanders hoped he would take their units northwards.¹¹⁹ He was certainly reluctant to see 3NZ Division withdrawn from the South Pacific. Likewise Harmon did not want to lose the Division and its specialist skills. Salmon reported 'COMGENSOPAC strongly stresses need to retain continuity pending availability of NZ personnel for make-up 1945 Pacific Div. COMGENSOPAC dislikes complete dismemberment as considers it will mean serious military loss of valued NZ experience of Pacific Amphibian, jungle and Japanese warfare also loss of NZ/American co-operation and method.'¹²⁰ Harmon proposed that 3NZ Division be reduced immediately to a Pacific Brigade Group at Green Island with FMC¹²¹ at Guadalcanal by 31 May 1944. The remainder, including the Base units, would be returned to New Zealand to satisfy manpower needs. Salmon warned that there was a strong danger of loss of goodwill if New Zealand left the Americans to do our fighting.¹²² However, Barrowclough rejected the proposal. Given the Division's long supply lines, dismantlement of base facilities would have rendered

¹¹⁷ In regard to Squarepeg, Halsey praised Barrowclough's 'forceful and intelligent leadership', Archives NZ, WAIL, 9, S14, Operations, Halsey to CINC US Fleet, 29 April 1944.

¹¹⁸ The Kavieng operation was replaced by the seizure of Emirau. Halsey was so short of troops that he 'stole' Marines from Fleet Marine Force resulting in 'screams of rage' from Lt. General Holland M. Smith. William F. Halsey and J. Bryan, Admiral Halsey's Story, New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1947, pp.190-1.

¹¹⁹ Sir Leonard Isitt claimed Halsey wished to take the RNZAF with him into the Central Pacific, Archives NZ, Air H3/15/4 Isitt to Kippenberger, 7 November 1947.

¹²⁰ Archives NZ, WAIL, 9, S1 Salmon to Barrowclough, undated March (?) 1944. Halsey suggested that the Division be reduced to one Pacific Brigade Group and the remaining personnel used to satisfy manpower requirements.

¹²¹ Field Maintenance Centre

¹²² Archives NZ, WAIL, S9, S1, Personal Papers EnzedSOPAC to Trinsed 1192, undated but probably early 1944.

the supply of a brigade group tenuous. As the strength of the Division was whittled away and its future became increasingly uncertain, American disenchantment set in.¹²³

Barrowclough was informed by Wellington on 7 March that the Division was to be withdrawn from the Solomons. He returned to New Zealand on 24 March and attended Cabinet meetings on the next two days.¹²⁴ Despite his vigorous opposition, arrangements were made for 7,000 soldiers to be returned to New Zealand by 1 July and 11,000 by October.¹²⁵ The rest of the Division was to withdraw to New Caledonia.

Another chance that 2NZ Division might return to New Zealand came after Rome fell on 4-5 June. The Division was suffering from battlefield fatigue and needed rest and reorganisation. Freyberg considered that 'there are strong reasons why the 2nd NZEF should be withdrawn to New Zealand if and when a favourable opportunity arises', but lamented that 'it would be a pity to withdraw the Division with victory in sight'.¹²⁶ This latter factor assumed further importance when he optimistically predicted the imminent collapse of the German Army and was 'anxious that New Zealand should be represented in the final phase to reap the full benefit of all their great sacrifices'.¹²⁷ Wellington consequently agreed on 1 July to send 2,000 reinforcements to him.¹²⁸ Realistically there was only one source for these men and 3NZ Division provided them.¹²⁹ In comparison with the sweeping events in Europe, in which 2NZ Division shared, the

¹²³ Archives NZ, WAI, 9, S1 Barrowclough reported that whilst 'COMSOPAC hopes that 3NZ Division will not go out of existence' he was quite indifferent as to the composition and form of the reduced force because he had no operational role for it. Archives NZ WAI, 9, S1 'Notes on Conferences with General Harmon and subsequently with Admiral Newton and General Barnett (to whom matter had been delegated by Admiral Halsey)'. Undated 1944, probably early March 1944. Prior to meeting of War Cabinet.

¹²⁴ Puttick recorded that the war cabinet agreed with Barrowclough's views generally, that there was strong feeling that 2 Division should return after the fall of Rome or earlier and that Fraser considered army participation in the Pacific as 'politically important in view of Australian opinion and the effect on New Zealand's position in post-war Pacific discussions..'. Archives NZ AD12, 28/2 General Puttick to NZLO London, Brigadier Park, 28 March 1944.

¹²⁵ Gillespie, p 197.

¹²⁶ Archives NZ, AD12, 28/2 Freyberg to Minister of External Affairs, 10 June 1944. Freyberg also alluded to shipping difficulties due to the imminent establishment of a Second Front.

¹²⁷ Documents, Vol II, No 384, p.353. Freyberg to Fraser 28 June 1944.

¹²⁸ Documents, Vol II, No 385, p.353. Acting PM to Freyberg, 1 July 1944.

¹²⁹ Archives NZ, AD12, D319/1/201 A Brigadier Conway to War Cabinet, 16 June 1944 'My opinion is that it would be preferable if possible to supply the draft wholly from 3rd Division'.

Solomon Islands campaign had become secondary and Japanese forces on Rabaul had been effectively neutralised by February 1944.¹³⁰

The dismemberment of the Division began on 24 April 1944 with 1850 men from the Green Island garrison being sent to New Zealand. This was followed by further withdrawals from the Treasury Islands and the Green Islands. The last Treasury Islands troops were withdrawn by 15 May. The command of Green Islands was handed over by Barrowclough on 30 May and the remnants were returned to New Zealand by 12 July.

Barrowclough re-established his command in New Caledonia in early June but found his work bedevilled by requests for personnel for industry, 2NZ Division and South-East Asia Command.¹³¹ There was an absence of clear policy from Wellington regarding the future of 3NZ Division¹³² and units were progressively run down whilst retaining full stores and equipment, some sub-units being 'reduced in strength to less than a football team'.¹³³ Barrowclough anticipated that Fraser would issue a definitive statement after his return from the Premiers' Conference in May 1944. On 15 June Halsey took command of the US Third Fleet.¹³⁴ and turned command as COMSOPAC over to Vice Admiral John Newton. Newton had been Deputy COMSOPAC for eight months and was familiar with 3NZ Division. In discussions with Barrowclough he said 'he did not want it to be thought that they wanted to get rid of 3NZ Division. He was sure that if it were reconstituted Admirals Halsey and Nimitz would be delighted to have us back again.'¹³⁵ However, Newton required the remaining units of the Division

¹³⁰ The position of Australian troops in the South West Pacific Area mirrored the New Zealand experience. Australian troops were involved in the slog up the Papua New Guinea coast but once their role in Cartwheel had been completed their future employment was problematic. One historian argues that '...Australia's share of the Pacific War ended in rancour and anticlimax'. Max Hastings Nemesis, London: Harper Collins, 2007 p372. Australia likewise suffered manpower problems leading to the demobilisation of troops. Paul Hasluck, The Government and People 1942-1945, Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1970, pp.283-304.

¹³¹ South East Asia Command. Gillespie, p.200. See also War Diary GOC 3NZ Division, 7 June to 25 June 1944, p.64.

¹³² Barrowclough desperately resisted the loss of officers and men. He wrote '... I should not be asked for responsible people unless and until the decision has been made that we are to be liquidated as a force. Archives NZ, WAI, 9, S1 Barrowclough to Conway, 27 June 1944.

¹³³ War Diary GOC 3NZ Division, 24 June 1944 to 4 July 1944, p.64.

¹³⁴ It is indicative of Halsey's attitude to New Zealanders that he made 'a farewell swing through my old territory' including a visit to Wellington in May 1944, Halsey and Bryan, p.192.

¹³⁵ Archives NZ, WAI, 87/21/1, Barrowclough to Fraser, 30 June 1944.

to be returned to New Zealand, supposedly to make room for incoming American units.¹³⁶

Barrowclough still hoped to retain a cadre so that the Division could be resurrected. On 26 June, he alluded to 'the wish of the War Cabinet ... to retain this Division in such shape that it will be capable of re-expansion'. Barrowclough considered this was possible provided that it did not fall below 6,000 soldiers, and he was concerned about the loss of technical specialists and key personnel. He commented that if the decision was made to focus the Army's efforts in the Pacific,

it will take a long time to re-build this Division and even in the most favourable circumstances I cannot see it being ready for action before March of next year (1945) at the earliest. Indeed, as far as I can see it, would have to be built up largely by raw recruits from New Zealand as any men who are likely to be available from the Middle East are not likely to be back, finish their leave and transferred to me until after March next.¹³⁷

As late as October Barrowclough discussed with Nimitz a possible assault on Ocean and Nauru Islands¹³⁸. Both were British territory¹³⁹ and Nauru in particular had been a major supplier of phosphate for New Zealand and Australian agriculture. Nimitz, however, firmly indicated that he could not spare shipping for such an operation.¹⁴⁰

Regarding the possibility of a New Zealand division being deployed against Japan, Puttick considered that this would be of little 'strategical importance' given the size of the forces deployed. He eschewed discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of

¹³⁶ As Gillespie laconically observes 'As so often happened these troops never arrived'. Newton's view was that 'whilst the Force was in its present disorganised condition and with no present assurance that it would ever again be reconstituted it should be moved back to New Zealand as it would be easier to supply there ...' War Diary GOC 3NZ Division 24 June to 4 July 1944, p64; Gillespie p 201; Archives NZ, AD 12 28/15/1 Operation Kiwi Minister of External Affairs Wellington to New Zealand Minister, Washington, 4 July 1944.

¹³⁷ Archives NZ, WAI, 87/21/1, Barrowclough to Army HQ, 26 June 1944.

¹³⁸ Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15/1 Operation Kiwi, Barrowclough to Army HQ, 30 October 1944.

¹³⁹ On a political level the British advised 'Great importance is attached here to providing from Empire sources garrisons for British Islands in Pacific recaptured from the enemy...' Archives NZ EA 28, 28/19 Garrisons Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs to the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom, Wellington, 12 July 1944. The New Zealand Chiefs of Staff considered 'There should be little difficulty in obtaining the numbers required for the Garrison Forces from the Army in New Zealand and from 3 Division'. However, they recommended that no offer should be made until New Zealand's Military Commitments were clarified. C.O.S. Paper No 199, 12 September 1944.

¹⁴⁰ Archives NZ, AD 12, 28/5, Barrowclough to Army HQ, 30 October 1944.

the withdrawal of 3NZ Division since effectively it had already occurred. Whilst acknowledging the value of 3NZ Division's cadres, Puttick considered that the delays before cadres could be expanded to a full fighting force and the pressures to release troops to civil life dissipated any advantages. He recommended that 2NZ Division be retained in Europe until the German surrender, that the cadres of 3NZ Division be disbanded, and that officers, NCOs and technical personnel be provided to Fijian and Tongan forces, British forces and India.¹⁴¹

Barrowclough set up Divisional Headquarters in New Zealand in August 1944 and the Division's strength fell to 6,000 men.¹⁴² Yet even now Wellington deferred making a final decision, awaiting a further recommendation of the British Chiefs of Staff.¹⁴³ This never arrived.¹⁴⁴ A report from Barrowclough¹⁴⁵, Conway and Bockett to the Minister of Defence, in September recommended leaving 2NZ Division in Europe till the defeat of Germany, after which a division should be deployed against Japan.¹⁴⁶ Puttick again recommended the disbandment of 3 Division cadres.¹⁴⁷ Fraser cabled Churchill on 9 September advising that it was proposed to disband 3NZ Division and reinforce 2NZ Division.

On 11 September the War Cabinet approved the disbandment of 3NZ Division and use of its personnel to reinforce 2NZ Division. Tied to this decision was Wellington's desire to relieve 3,200 men long-serving veterans from 2NZ Division. After the debacle

¹⁴¹ Archives NZ, WAI, 1 AD 491/8 Appreciation Of The Situation Regarding Strength of New Zealand Military Forces Overseas by Lt Gen. E Puttick, Chief of the General Staff, 4-21 August 1944.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Documents, Vol II, No 388, p 355. PMNZ to Freyberg, 25 August 1944 'As we are still awaiting some indication from the United Kingdom Chiefs we are still unable to make a final decision as the future of the two divisions, but I trust that this will not be much longer delayed'.

¹⁴⁴ Puttick visited the Chief of Imperial General Staff, Field Marshall Alanbrooke in London on 22 June 1944 and sought his views. Alanbrooke replied that if 2NZ Division were to remain in Europe he thought it advisable to retain the cadres of 3NZ Division as long as possible. Puttick 'purposely refrained from referring to the views of C.I.G.S. in his appreciation to the War Cabinet 'which aimed at arriving at a logical conclusion uninfluenced by outside opinion'. Archives NZ, AD12, 28/2 Puttick to War Cabinet, 21 August 1944. In response to a query by Alanbrooke, Puttick assured Alanbrooke in a telegram that 'I do not (repeat not), think that disbandment of cadres of 3 Division if decided on necessarily prevents though it may delay or hamper provision of a NZ Division for Far East war'. Archives NZ, AD12, 28/2 Army HQ to War Office, London, 11 September 1944.

¹⁴⁵ By October 1944 Barrowclough had come to an acceptance that the creation of a Pacific division would be based 'on the frame work of 2NZ Division..' and that 'the new formation would have to be constituted in Egypt rather than New Zealand. Once this became apparent it was an obvious step to disband 3NZ Division'. War Diary GOC 3NZ Division 9 August 1944 to 10 October 1944, p70.

¹⁴⁶ Gillespie, p 202.

¹⁴⁷ Archives NZ Puttick Papers Puttick 5, 27 Views of C.I.G.S., 5 September 1944.

of the Furlough men, Wellington understood that troops withdrawn from Italy could not be returned to combat.¹⁴⁸ Fraser announced the disbandment of 3NZ Division in Parliament on 21 September. By the time Barrowclough issued his final order disbanding the Division on 20 October there were only a few Headquarters and Base Staff to read it.¹⁴⁹

With the end of the war in Europe, attention focused on the Pacific. Fraser bluntly told the War Cabinet that 'New Zealand has a place in the Pacific and we cannot avoid our responsibility. That would be desertion.' Canada, South Africa, the United Kingdom and Australia had 'all given notice that they would do their share in the Pacific.'¹⁵⁰ Fraser considered that 'the British Commonwealth land force was attractive since it offered opportunity to the New Zealand forces to fight in the heart of Japan. Participation in such operations would yield real dividend to New Zealand.'¹⁵¹ It was a common theme in military and political circles in 1944 that the return of 3NZ Division was only as a temporary withdrawal from the Pacific and that a division would be fielded in 1945 against Japan.¹⁵² However, in view of Labour's loss of the Hamilton by-election in May 1945 and Opposition allegations of mismanagement, Nash wrote to Fraser querying whether New Zealand could meet its obligations to the Allies by providing a division for the Pacific and survive as a government.¹⁵³ There were limits to New Zealand's resources and the population was war weary. Nevertheless, on 21 June 1945 the War Cabinet approved the creation of a two-brigade division for the Pacific, composed of 2NZ Division veterans and troops from New Zealand. This unit would be additional to RNZAF and RNZN units, and was to form part of what Churchill shortly afterwards referred to as 'a British Commonwealth force of some three to five divisions, carried in British shipping and supported by British naval forces and a small tactical air component. The whole force would be placed under United States command.'¹⁵⁴ However, the deployment of such a contingent was forestalled by the Japanese surrender.

¹⁴⁸ Documents, Vol III, No 434, p 456, War Cabinet Minute, 11 September 1944.

¹⁴⁹ Gillespie, p.203.

¹⁵⁰ Archives NZ, EA1, 81/1/6, War Cabinet - Land Force in the War against Japan, 1 August 1945.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² NARA 912 War Cabinet Offices to Joint Staff Mission, Field Marshall Dill, 19 February 1944.

¹⁵³ Wood, People at War, p.301.

¹⁵⁴ Documents, Vol. III, 458, p.488-9, Churchill to Fraser, 5 July 1945

Despite the disbandment of 3NZ Division, Fraser had continued to consider some use of New Zealand forces in combat in the South Pacific. In July 1945 he raised with Freyberg the possible deployment of Fijian troops with New Zealand land forces. Fraser was in favour of this 'because of the previous association of Fijian troops with the New Zealand Army and the fact that there are a substantial number of New Zealand personnel in the Fijian forces.'¹⁵⁵ He reminded Freyberg that there were more than two thousand Japanese troops in the Shortland and Choiseul Islands and seemed to suggest that New Zealand troops be used in removing them from these British territories.

Throughout the disbandment process it is notable how often the fate of 3NZ Division was referred to the British in the form of Churchill, Alanbrooke and the British Chiefs of Staff.¹⁵⁶ Very little high-level consultation occurred with the Americans. They simply had to accept the situation. By cannibalising 3NZ Division to bring 2NZ division up to strength, Wellington had in large part showed its determination to fulfil its Commonwealth commitments at the expense of its Pacific commitments. During the period 1942-3 New Zealand had been dependent upon American forces for its defence. Prior to that time Wellington had harboured uneasy feelings towards Washington, fearful of American encroachments into British territory in the Pacific. Later in the war that feeling of uneasiness was resurrected when some Americans voiced their opinion that Washington should annex territories it conquered such as Tarawa.¹⁵⁷ By 1944 Wellington was again thinking in terms of Commonwealth defence and the Royal Navy once more resuming its traditional role in New Zealand's defence.¹⁵⁸ The deployment of the British Pacific Fleet in early 1945 was a manifestation of the growing strength of the Royal Navy. New Zealand ships and carrier pilots were prominent.¹⁵⁹ The Australian public welcomed the return of the Royal Navy and undoubtedly this

¹⁵⁵ Documents, Vol. III, 457, p.487.

¹⁵⁶ For example Wellington enquired of the British Chiefs of Staff as to manpower issues in early 1944 and the British felt that there had to be consultation with the US Chiefs of Staff. Archives NZ, AD12, C.C.S. 499, 26 February 1944.

¹⁵⁷ 'Fraser reported at Commonwealth discussions in London in April 1945 that members of the United States Armed Forces in the Pacific were talking in 'imperialist' terms'. Thorne, pp.556, 712-713.

¹⁵⁸ Paper on Post-War Security prepared by NZ War Cabinet Secretariat, 20 January 1944, Archives NZ EA1 81/1/16 F.G. Shedden to A.D. McIntosh, 21 January 1944..

¹⁵⁹ Nicholas Evan Sarantakes, 'One Last Crusade: The British Pacific Fleet and its Impact on the Anglo-American Alliance', English Historical Review, 2006.

sentiment would have been echoed in New Zealand.¹⁶⁰ New Zealand 'looked forward to the resumption of an overriding relationship with the Mother Country,'¹⁶¹ The American partnership had served its purpose.

The disbandment of 3NZ Division was driven by an acute manpower shortage. Ostensibly it developed because of the need for men to produce food but the reality was that the agricultural sector did not need large numbers of men and the demobilisation process was inefficiently handled.¹⁶² The real need came from the RNZAF intent on expanding to 20 squadrons in the Pacific, 2NZ Division desperately needing reinforcements and from manufacturing industries.¹⁶³ 3NZ Division was a casualty of a small nation attempting to do too much from a small population base.

¹⁶⁰ 'The Chief of the Intelligence Staff of the Eastern Fleet observed "Australia as a whole is still grateful to the Americans but tired of them and apprehensive. As a result, the feeling in all classes is predominantly in favour of Great Britain." Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Thorne, p.646.

¹⁶² Archives NZ, EA 87/21/1 Return of Men From Pacific Division, HR Bockett, Controller of Manpower to Minister of National Service, 24 July 1944. The return of some 1855 men was deferred until they could be employed in the freezing works; the farming quota set at 7,000 was reduced to 5,000 as a tentative figure 'due to the dilatoriness of farmers in submitting applications for labour...'.
¹⁶³ Air Vice Marshall Sir Leonard Isitt considered that in late 1943 New Zealand had reached the limit of its manpower but also considered that 'there were plenty of men in the air force and plenty in the pipeline... and there was some justification in the criticism that we were overmanned. There was a good deal of pressure from overseas sources to increase our food production. This suggestion suited our politicians who were only too pleased to grasp this easy and politically popular way out'. J. Henderson Interview with Air Vice Marshall Sir Leonard Isitt, December 1969, p9.

CHAPTER 7: COCONUT BOMBERS, PINEAPPLE PICKERS AND BALI HAI

On returning to New Zealand, 3NZ Division soldiers faced widespread public ignorance as to what they had accomplished¹ and the accusation that they were ‘pineapple pickers’ and ‘coconut bombers’² who had lived in comfort in the Pacific Islands whilst 2NZ Division had fought the real war in Africa and Europe. The experience of individual soldiers varied, but for most it was not an enjoyable war. In the Solomons they faced a tropical environment which one historian has referred to as ‘nature’s killing machine’,³ and a number had their health broken. They had to face an implacable foe known to torture and execute prisoners. For many, lack of basic facilities and boredom were major problems. This chapter will show that for most of 3NZ Division’s soldiers theirs was not a comfortable war in a tropical idyll.

A paradox of New Zealand’s participation in World War II was that despite the anxiety caused by the threat of Japanese invasion in 1941-42, the New Zealand public regarded the Pacific as being an American theatre and interest evaporated once the threat of invasion had passed. A veteran of the fighting in the Solomons comments:

Not unnaturally an attitude developed that the war in the Pacific was a kind of secondary war; if you had been serving in the Pacific you had ‘only been to the Pacific’. Was there really any proper fighting going on there? Did not New Zealanders in the Pacific just sit under palm trees, eat bananas and drink beer... The first reaction of most people sent to the Pacific was usually disgust. You

¹ Compounding the problem, some members of 3NZ Division were unsure as to what they had accomplished, or even why they were in the South Pacific. See Archives NZ, EA 87/21/1, Part 2, PM Dept. Papers on defence 3 Div. Letter A.K. Fagan to PM 20 May 1947.

² The term ‘Coconut Bombers’ was perceived by some as an insulting jibe and by others as lighthearted humour. Quite often the troops referred to themselves as ‘coconut bombers’. The origins of the term are obscure and none of the veterans interviewed was able to explain what it meant. It possibly had its origins in the trench raids of World War One where parties of men carrying haversacks of grenades lobbed them into enemy trenches. They were called ‘trench bombers’. In Fiji in 1940 there were no grenades available and troops were provided with wooden imitations and the soldiers may have been ironic in describing themselves ‘coconut bombers’. The expressions ‘pineapple pickers’ and ‘banana fusiliers’ plainly convey an impression of indolence.

³ Eric M. Bergerud, *Fire in the Sky - The Air War in the South Pacific*, Oxford: Westview Press, 2000, p.97.

knew what the man in the street - and the woman - felt and said about forces sent to the Pacific, the 'banana pickers', the 'coconut bombers'.⁴

A parcel arrived in New Caledonia from New Zealand and was given to a 3NZ Division soldier. Inside was a note from a woman expressing the hope that the parcel would be received by the boys in the Middle East rather than the 'Pineapple Pickers'.⁵ Returning veterans had to endure jibes about 'coconut bombers' and 'pineapple pickers' and 'banana pickers' as though they had spent their war in a luxuriant idyll.⁶ In the same way that prisoners of the Japanese were unable to convey the awfulness of their experience⁷ and had to submit to ill-informed jibes about sitting out the war in safety, so too did veterans of 3NZ Division have difficulty conveying their experiences. At least one veteran applying to join his local RSA turned on his heel and left never to return after being called a 'coconut bomber'.⁸

This attitude of disdain⁹ can be partially attributed to the garrison roles that the Division played in Fiji, Norfolk Island, Tonga and New Caledonia. Garrison duty is unglamorous and because these places were not invaded the public would have assumed an absence of danger or discomfort. Even the troops that undertook garrison duty were frequently 'browned off' by the sense of inactivity and purposelessness.

The small number of combat operations carried out by 3NZ Division was dwarfed by those of 2NZ Division. The war in North Africa and Europe was on a larger scale and progress toward victory was measurable. The commanders in Europe were colourful characters and household names in New Zealand. There was a feeling that the war would be decided in Europe and this is evidenced by the unwillingness of Maori to provide a battalion for service in the Pacific. Europe had clear strategic goals in terms

⁴ T.E. Dorman, *The Green War*, Christchurch: The Caxton press, 1997, p.5.

⁵ Ron Tucker – correspondence. Author's Collection.

⁶ The attitude of 2NZ Division troops to those of 3NZ Division tended to vary. One soldier from 3NZ Division posted to Italy recalled with bitterness the disdain of 2NZ Division troops to those of 3NZ Division - 'They thought we spent our time lying under coconut trees talking to black sheilas'. The bitterness endured into the post-war world with ANZAC Day being particularly difficult. He recalled a 2NZ Division veteran flicking his Pacific Star and saying 'What did you do to earn this?' Allan Rogers Interview, 20 September 2006.

⁷ Gavan Daws, *Prisoners of the Japanese*, New York: William Morrow & Co., 1994, p.377.

⁸ John Tonkin Covell conversation 7 July 2007, regarding his father's experience.

⁹ The disdain impacted on the troops. A veteran recalls being on a 3NZ Division troop train when a woman onlooker called out 'look there are soldiers' only to have one of the soldiers exclaim 'no, we are not soldiers, we are Coconut Bombers.' Campbell Davie Interview, 2006.

of enemy capitals, whereas the South Pacific lacked readily identifiable battlegrounds. Few had ever heard of Vella Lavella, the Treasury Islands or the Green Islands.



Painting by Russell Clark. Patrol and Banyan, Mono Island 1944. Archives NZ, AAAC 898, NCWA126

Furthermore, 2NZ Division had a superb publicity machine attached to it. Newsreels, photos and news stories about it were plentiful. Churchill made favourable references to the Division in the British Parliament. Awards for gallantry, including Victoria Crosses, were made to its soldiers. In short, the ‘glamour’ of 2NZ Division completely dwarfed its sister.

3NZ Division had a publicity unit but it got very little news into New Zealand newspapers. By way of example, a New Zealand photographer was present at Operation Goodtime but his camera malfunctioned and the only photographs available came from American sources. Ignorance shaped the New Zealand public’s perception of 3NZ Division. This was partly because ‘There is a constant conflict between the military need for secrecy and the media demand for disclosure’¹⁰ and the Americans

¹⁰ Miles Hudson and John Stainer, War and the Media, New York: New York University Press, 1998, p.308.

were intent on preserving operational security. Compounding matters was the friction between MacArthur's South West Pacific Headquarters and that of Halsey's South Pacific Headquarters. There was some discomfiture when MacArthur's publicists broke the news of Operation Goodtime.¹¹ General Harmon was intent on keeping the presence of New Zealand troops on Vella Lavella secret 'in order to keep the Japanese guessing about the Allied order of battle'.¹² This resulted in Barrowclough lamenting that 'I have seen more newspaper publicity given to the rounding up of some bushman who has gone berserk than was given to the operations of two Battalions in difficult country and under circumstances where we had a pretty heavy list of casualties.'¹³ American war correspondents complained that they had 'the greatest possible difficulty in getting censorship approval of any articles containing any reference to New Zealand troops' and such reference would invariably hold up the despatch.¹⁴

Additionally, there was little incentive for journalists to travel to the tropics to observe 3NZ Division. It was generally in garrison mode and lacked sensational stories. It is no coincidence that the most famous piece of archival film footage on 3NZ Division involves soldiers producing a home-made washing machine.¹⁵

Two official war artists, Russell Clark and Lt. Allan B. Barns-Graham, produced artworks showing not only the lassitude of garrison life but also the immediacy of combat.¹⁶ Sadly, their works were not exhibited to any extent and were completely over-shadowed by the war artist of 2NZ Division, Peter McIntyre. Worse, Barns-Graham's works were denigrated in the post-war period as being inferior. The scope of their efforts was limited - 'the jungle does not lend itself to any dramatic or spectacular incidents and in spite of the grim nature of such fighting, much of the work portrays seemingly peaceful scenes. The artists' struggle was rather with humidity, heat and rain.'¹⁷

¹¹ Archives NZ, Puttick Papers, Puttick to Barrowclough, 4 November 1943.

¹² Archives NZ, Puttick 5, W1427/5 Puttick to Barrowclough, 4 November 1943.

¹³ Archives NZ, Puttick 5 W1427/5 Barrowclough to Puttick, 23 October 1943.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ 'Wash Day in the Pacific', Weekly Review – War Years, National Film Unit, Stage Door Video NZ Ltd, Auckland.

¹⁶ Clark was told what he could paint because the Army feared that drawings and paintings could end up in enemy hands. Tony Martin, New Zealand Images of War, Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1990, p.41.

¹⁷ The Third Division Histories Committee, Base Wallahs, Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1946, p.140.

Barrowclough complained about the low quality of the journalists attached to the Division and their lack of success in getting items into the New Zealand media. Those complaints were echoed by the rank and file.¹⁸ There were, however, difficulties that journalists had to struggle with. Firstly, the Public Relations Office was formed relatively late and only arrived in New Caledonia in April 1943. It consisted of war correspondents, artists, photographers, a mobile recording unit and an archives section. Initially, there was only one war correspondent who sent his reports to the Director of Publicity in Wellington. He was instructed to ‘not “over-colour” such experiences as mud, mosquitoes and monotony.’¹⁹ Once the Division moved into the forward zone the correspondent had to submit material to the Americans for censorship and competed with Australian and American journalists.²⁰ Some stories were ‘killed because verification was unavailable.’²¹ The Division operating in brigades on different islands exacerbated the difficulties of providing coverage and it was not until Operation Squarepeg that a second journalist was appointed, allowing one to be with the soldiers whilst the other at Guadalcanal handled the despatch of news.²²

The Division’s official photographers faced myriad difficulties from having to supply their own camera through to totally inadequate facilities for processing film. The Americans eventually assisted with the supply ‘of cameras, paper and all the material necessary for a photographic service.’²³ Although 3,200 negatives were exposed, little found its way into the New Zealand media.

The publicity the Division did receive amounted to some NZ Film Unit footage of garrison life, some photographs and a sound unit which recorded messages from the soldiers. The news items were rarely front-page material and consequently the Division began to sink into obscurity.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.140.

¹⁹ Ibid., p.138.

²⁰ American War Correspondents complained that they had ‘the greatest possible difficulty in getting censorship approval of any articles containing any reference to New Zealand troops and any such reference invariably delayed the despatch. Archives NZ, Puttick 5, W1427/5 Barrowclough to Puttick, 23 October 1944.

²¹ Base Wallahs, p.139.

²² Ibid., p.139.

²³ Ibid., p.140.

The need for operational security often created anxieties for the families of men left in New Zealand. The wife of a newly married soldier in 34 Bn only knew that her husband had been shipped overseas suddenly from his camp in Papakura. She did not become aware that he was in Fiji till much later.²⁴ A Sergeant who wrote to his wife telling her where he was and where his unit was moving to was sentenced to 90 days detention in 1944.²⁵

One author greatly shaped perceptions of the war in the South Pacific. During World War II James Michener was a US Navy Lieutenant stationed on Espiritu Santo. After the war he won a Pulitzer Prize for Tales of the South Pacific,²⁶ which inspired Rogers and Hammerstein to write the 1949 smash Broadway hit musical South Pacific. This led to the 1958 movie South Pacific,²⁷ which depicted two love stories set in the fictional island paradise of Bali Hai, featuring American Navy nurses, Seabees, exotic, available native women and French plantation owners. With backdrop of lush green foliage, coconut palms, golden sands and soft sunsets the musical and film conveyed an image of a modern Club Med. Michener later stated that the inspiration for Bali Hai was a tiny, miserable village on Mono Island (possibly Falamai).²⁸ The musical and film contributed to a misleading image of the war in the South Pacific.²⁹

The image of the South Pacific as an earthly paradise had begun long before. For many, the islands of the South Pacific were reminiscent of a Dorothy Lamour movie.³⁰ The gulf between ‘What we Expected’ and ‘What we Found’³¹ was profound for Allied soldiers in the Solomons. The reality was often rotting, stinking vegetation, oppressive humidity, deadly insect and animal life, incessant rain, a multiplicity of diseases and emaciated natives. Barrowclough described Vella Lavella’s climate as ‘trying and very humid. The noises in the jungle at night have to be heard to be believed. Every

²⁴ Interview with Mrs Kathleen Bee, 28 December 2006.

²⁵ Archives NZ WWII, DAZ 113/9/5, 19 July 1944.

²⁶ James Michener, Tales of the South Pacific, New York: Fawcett Books, 1993.

²⁷ Rogers & Hammerstein’s South Pacific, Director - Joshua A. Logan, 20th Century Fox, 1958.

²⁸ James Michener, The World is My Home: A Memoir, New York: Random House, 1992, p.91.

²⁹ Max Hastings, Nemesis – The Battle For Japan 1944-45, London: Harper Collins, 2007, p.xix.

³⁰ Craig M. Cameron, American Samurai - Myth, Imagination and the Conduct of Battle in the First Marine Division 1941-1951, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp.70-71.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp.76-77.

conceivable kind of bird, insect and frog joins in a chorus immediately after nightfall, which drowns every other sound except gunfire'.³²

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An attraction of war to some young men is adventure and the chance to prove themselves. Initially, the South Pacific offered only monotonous garrison duty. To the young men who enlisted to fight the Axis in North Africa, that was often a huge blow.³⁶ Many of the soldiers deployed to Fiji found themselves later shipped out as reinforcements to 2NZ Division. They could look back on their service in the South Pacific as merely a training period.

The problem of creating an effective corps of officers and NCOs was faced by all the Allied powers.³⁷ With New Zealand's miniscule pre-war permanent force and the priority given to 2NZ Division, 3NZ Division faced particular difficulties. The forces deployed to Fiji 1940-42 needed officers, and this need was initially met by using officers with World War One experience. However, they were sometimes overage, physically unfit, or otherwise unfit for command. The young soldiers they commanded referred to them as 'Blood Pressures' or 'Retreads'. Brigadier Cunningham was himself medically unfit for overseas deployment. Although many of these officers were

³² Archives NZ AD12, 28/15/1 - Pt. 4, Operation Kiwi, Barrowclough to Army HQ, 20 September 1943.

³³ Craig M. Cameron, American Samurai - Myth, Imagination and the Conduct of Battle in the First Marine Division 1941-1951, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp.70-71.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.76-77.

³⁵ Archives NZ AD12, 28/15/1 - Pt. 4, Operation Kiwi, Barrowclough to Army HQ, 20 September 1943.

³⁶ This did not hold true after Pearl Harbor when 35, 36 & 37 Battalions were formed from the 8th Reinforcements about to leave for 2NZ Division and sent to Fiji to bolster the force there.

³⁷ It was less of a problem for the Axis Powers with their heavy emphasis on the militarisation of their societies prior to World War II.

valuable in training troops and in garrison duties, they were often unfit for the rigours of tropical service. Cunningham had limited success with purging the unfit.³⁸ This had a deleterious effect on morale, with instances of drunkenness and defeatism in the officers' mess, and a failure to enforce disciplinary standards such as saluting officers.³⁹

Command problems were to the forefront of Barrowclough's mind in 1942 as he strove to create 3NZ Division in New Zealand. He purged unfit officers, and obtained younger qualified officers. Fortunately, Barrowclough had time to train his Division, and by the time of its deployment into the Solomon Island it had obtained a high standard of discipline and there was confidence by the soldiers in their officers.

The troops initially deployed into the South Pacific were short of stocks of uniforms and equipment. A soldier of 30th Battalion in Fiji in 1940 commented that 'We were like a bunch of tramps in those days ... We were issued with shorts that had been stowed away in ordnance stores since the last war. The metal buttons had rusted through on to the cloth. The shirts, also of World War I vintage, started to rot across the back. Our felt hats refused to assume the prescribed shape and our knee length puttees were moth eaten. We scrubbed our worn out old-time web and cleaned both sides of our brass. No wonder they gave us smartening-up exercises.'⁴⁰ A soldier in 29th Battalion who arrived in Fiji in April 1941 recalled that 'Initially we were issued with what looked to me secondhand shorts and shirts. I distinctly remember the metal buttons being rusted into the material'.⁴¹ Moreover, the uniforms were inappropriate and hindered their fighting ability. They included puttees that attracted thorny seeds when moving through the bush, woollen clothing, and rain capes that gave little protection against torrential downpours.⁴² Heat and humidity made buttoned-up uniforms very uncomfortable. As Bergerud comments, 'the South Pacific was no place for an officer who was a stickler for proper dress'.⁴³ Yet traditional military beliefs linked the smartness of soldier's uniforms with discipline. Cunningham insisted on the soldiers clothing being smart

³⁸ Archives NZ, WAI DAZ 139/1/5 Cunningham to Army HQ, 30 June 1941.

³⁹ Archives NZ EA 86/1/1 Defence of the Pacific Section, Letter from a Major, General Staff Security Intelligence 1 July 1941.

⁴⁰ The Third Division Histories Committee, *Pacific Kiwis*, Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1947, pp.10-11.

⁴¹ Harry Bioletti, Narrative 25 February 2007. Author's Collection.

⁴² 'In our knapsacks when on parade we had our oilskin capes, not to keep us dry but to give a square tidy look to our knapsacks.' Ibid.

⁴³ Bergerud, p.99.

and shirts and tunics being buttoned up.⁴⁴ By the time the Division was returned to New Zealand the uniforms were rotting and leather becoming covered in mould. Replacements had to be available.⁴⁵

The troops of 14 Brigade, being the first in combat, were given priority for American-designed twill 'jungle suits', and were distinguishable by their comfortable, light, green clothing and forage caps from their less fortunate brethren in 8 Brigade who had khaki drill uniforms, painted camouflage⁴⁶ and steel helmets covered with green hessian. For the 8 Brigaders their clothing was immensely uncomfortable - 'the thick jungle uniform coated with green paint and further proofed against the air with its new coating of mud, is a very different affair from the ducks and silk shirts of traditional tropical wear. Your clothes are continuously soaked in sweat and when you lie down at night in your little hole in the ground, you sweat again.'⁴⁷

It was a similar situation with weaponry. In 1940 New Zealand faced a chronic shortage ranging from small arms through to anti-aircraft guns. Rifles for Cunningham's Brigade Group were not issued until the men had been in camp a month and machine guns were swapped among units for training purposes.⁴⁸ The troops' first introduction to basic weapons training was often with World War One weaponry such as the Lee Enfield rifle, the Vickers Machine Gun, or the Lewis gun. Weapons instructors were few and training often inadequate. Ammunition shortages meant opportunities for live shoots were rare for artillery units. Grenade training was often done with mockups.

The most effective weapons for jungle fighting proved to be the grenade, which did not generally disclose the position of the thrower, and short-range, high-calibre weapons like the Thomson Sub-Machine Gun, and Bren Gun. Stocks filtered through to 3NZ

⁴⁴ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 121/9/B/3/1.

⁴⁵ On Fiji 1940-41 the soldiers had worn out their clothing during their seven month stint and had used the remnants as rags for cleaning weapons. Since they could not account for the worn out items the Army docked their pay and insisted on the soldiers authorising this before they were allowed to leave Fiji in May 1941. Archives NZ WAI, DAZ 174/1/1-14.

⁴⁶ The khaki drill shirt and trousers were sprayed with dark green, dark brown and lime paints.

⁴⁷ The Third Division Histories Committee, The 36th Battalion, Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1948 pp.68-69.

⁴⁸ Archives NZ, WAI DAZ 30/1/16 Vol1.

Division so that by the time of its deployment into the Solomons it was adequately equipped.

Living conditions were often primitive. The first soldiers deployed to Fiji were faced with primitive conditions which only gradually improved. Armourers were forced to work with ammunition that was exposed to the elements because of lack of storage facilities. The two major New Zealand camps were located 152 miles apart linked by rough, unpaved, sometimes dangerous road. Because of lack of sanitary facilities, dysentery hit the first troops hard and full hospital facilities had to be set up in each defence area.⁴⁹ The wet Suva Peninsula was particularly hard on the health of troops. The New Zealand medical personnel had to learn on the job. Fiji was no Club Med.

Even back in New Zealand the troops faced unpleasant conditions, being quartered in makeshift barracks at Papakura in unweatherproof accommodation, despite having recently returned from the tropics. Discipline problems erupted in October 1942 when some unfortunate soldiers were quartered in sheep and cattle pens at the Hamilton Show Grounds.⁵⁰

Allied troops sent to the Solomons had to deal with a range of deadly tropical diseases of which malaria was the most potent.⁵¹ Allied medical services coped with the challenge, whereas the Japanese medical services collapsed. The success of 3NZ Division entailed ensuring that anti-malarial precautions were followed. It had learned bitter lessons from its exposure to tropical diseases on Fiji and it was appreciated that anti-malarial drugs needed to be available before the troops were sent overseas. Sources of quinine had been seized by the Japanese, but a synthetic malarial suppressant drug, Atabrine,⁵² was available from American sources. Getting the troops to practice anti-malarial precautions such as wearing long-sleeved shirts and trousers, and using insect

⁴⁹ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 121/1/7-9 Appendix II.

⁵⁰ Archives NZ WAI, DAZ 134/1/25.

⁵¹ Malaria inflicts debilitating fevers, headaches and vomiting, reduces energy and if left untreated can result in death. Allied to other diseases such as Typhus, the victim's resistance is severely diminished. Fortunately, for 3NZ Division malaria did not occur in Fiji or New Caledonia. It was prevalent in the New Hebrides and the Solomon Islands. T. Duncan Stout, War Surgery and Medicine, Wellington: War Histories Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, 1954, pp.528-9.

⁵² Now known as Mepacrine. Atabrine is frequently referred to as 'Atabrin'

repellent, anti-mosquito nets and Atabrine tablets proved to be difficult.⁵³ A rumour that Atabrine resulted in impotence or sterility (false) and turned its users yellow (true) meant that the troops had to be forced to take the drug.⁵⁴ The correct dosage was unknown, and there was uncertainty as to its safety or efficacy.⁵⁵ The drug was bitter and ‘sometimes caused headaches, nausea and vomiting, and in a few cases it produced a temporary psychosis.’⁵⁶

The effects of slack anti-malarial discipline can be seen in the experience of the Chindits in Burma, where Wingate anti-malarial precautions lapsed, resulting in enormous and unnecessary casualties. Likewise, Merrill’s Marauders lacked anti-malarial discipline and the combat worthiness of that unit was destroyed by malaria.⁵⁷ Malaria devastated the US Army and USMC units during the Guadalcanal Campaign with an estimated 80% infection rate.⁵⁸

3NZ Division had a Malaria Control Unit which consisted of a Headquarters Unit and three Field Malaria Control Sections. Its duties were to survey malarial areas, plan control measures and implement them and it trained in conjunction with the USMCU.⁵⁹ Officers of the Unit described the malaria discipline in the Division as ‘average to poor’. They ascribed malaria casualties to ‘gross carelessness, poor discipline, the failure to use repellent, mosquito nets and Atabrine.’ The units on Vella Lavella were described as having an apathetic and fatalistic attitude to malaria.⁶⁰ They had been

⁵³ David Williams comments - ‘That was not my experience - our battalion accepted the need and the officers had no problem with it. Atabrine was administered on parade and you watched each man swallow it. We started with a dose of 4 tablets a week (1/2 daily & none on Sunday) rising to 6 (1 a day, none on Sunday). When in action we had to rely on buttoning up clothing and putting repellent on exposed skin. When in tents and mosquito nets arrived we used them. Williams interview 16 September 2006.

⁵⁴ American medical officers observed that ‘it was impossible to get co-operation from officers and men ... even under bivouac conditions’, Albert E. Cowdrey, Fighting for Life - American Military Medicine in World War II, New York: The Free Press, 1994, p.63.

⁵⁵ Stout, pp.530-531.

⁵⁶ Cowdrey, p.63.

⁵⁷ Arthur Smith & Craig Hooper, ‘The Mosquito can be More Dangerous than the Mortar Round - The Obligations of Command’, Naval War College Review, Winter 2005, Volume 58, No. 1, pp.77-87.

⁵⁸ Stout, p.530. A study of a regiment of 1st US Marine Division by American Navy doctors concluded ‘that one man out of three was unfit for any duty that might involve combat’. Cowdrey, p.65.

⁵⁹ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 182/6/1-6. Report of Lt. LJ Dumbleton O/C Detached Party MCU 12 August 1943. Half of the MCU in January 1943 had deployed to Efate to obtain experience of malaria control operations and assist the USMCU which was short of personnel.

⁶⁰ Archives NZ, WAI, 1 DAZ 182/6/1-6. Report NCO I/C Detachment 35 Bn CT Area to OC 1 (NZ) Malaria Control Unit. Steps were taken to re-impose anti-malaria discipline and spray likely areas.

involved in close-quarter jungle fighting and had let anti-malarial precautions lapse. The discipline of 8 Brigade was described as 'poor'⁶¹ and on Stirling Island⁶² it was noted that New Zealanders and Americans were bathing in the evening and failing to wear long-sleeved shirts and trousers. It was difficult when Americans failed to practice anti-malarial measures and there were New Zealand soldiers living alongside them.⁶³

Although deployed in a malarious zone, 3NZ Division had a comparatively low rate of infection.⁶⁴ However, it was lucky in that much of its time was outside the malaria season of February to June. Of the 120 malaria cases from September 1943-June 1944, 43 were from Guadalcanal, 44 from Vella Lavella, 11 from the Treasury Islands and 22 from Green Island. This reflects the greater degree of control of malaria as the war progressed. Ironically, a Field Park Company based on Guadalcanal had the Division's highest rate of malaria due to its proximity to a mosquito breeding area, followed by a battalion involved in fighting on Vella Lavella where malaria discipline broke down.⁶⁵ Arguably, if the Division had been deployed to Guadalcanal in August 1942 it would have suffered the same high malaria rate as American units.⁶⁶ Luck and timing played a role.⁶⁷

Ultimately anti-malaria discipline came back to officers. The MCU correctly identified that 'the malaria rate of a unit will vary inversely with the degree of malaria discipline within that unit. This discipline will depend upon a proper sense of responsibility among the officers of the unit.'⁶⁸ It took time, however, for officers to be educated and to enforce anti-malarial measures.

⁶¹ Ibid Report Lt. RD Dick to OC 1 (NZ) MCU 15 November 1943.

⁶² Archives NZ WAI, DAZ 182/6/1-6. Report Lt. RD Dick, 1 (NZ) Malaria Control Section Att. 8 Bde Gp 15 November 1943. Anopheline breeding grounds were found on Stirling Island with larvae in streams in the southern and western coastal areas of Mono Island.

⁶³ Archives NZ, WA II, 1, DAZ 182/6/1-6.

⁶⁴ The average monthly malaria rate 1943-44 was 1 per 1,000 and the percentage of primary attacks was 0.88%. Stout, p.539.

⁶⁵ Stout, pp.537-8.

⁶⁶ Atabrine did not become available until September 1942. Cowdrey, p.63.

⁶⁷ Barrowclough in 1943 anticipated that he would have 'on up to 1,000 men being continually inactive as a result of malaria'. This weighed heavily on his mind in terms of the reinforcements and replacements he would need. Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15 Barrowclough to Fraser, 7 July 1943. Fortunately he was incorrect.

⁶⁸ Archives NZ WAI, 1, DAZ 182/6/1-6 Interim Report 11 September 1943.

A myriad of other tropical diseases and medical problems afflicted the soldiers of 3NZ Division. These varied from the uncomfortable to the lethal and included sunburn, bronchial problems, hookworm, septic sores, dengue fever,⁶⁹ typhoid, dysentery and hepatitis. Dysentery was particularly common. Outbreaks occurred when B-Force deployed to Fiji in 1941 and this was repeated as new camps were set up.⁷⁰ Inability to provide flyproof latrines, cookhouses and sleeping areas meant that infection spread until these facilities became established.⁷¹ Poor sanitary practices and lack of discipline contributed to the problem. Dysentery had no respect of rank. Brigadier Cunningham was hospitalised with it and returned to New Zealand.⁷²

Skin diseases plagued the soldiers from the start. On Fiji the soldiers suffered skin irritations and eczema. Minor cuts had to be treated or would turn septic, due to sweat, inadequate washing facilities, larval mites, fungoid infection and sodden clothing.⁷³ Skin diseases were a major medical problem as seen by the percentage of unit strength attending daily Regimental Aid Posts in December 1943 - 6-20% on the Treasury Islands, 6-10% on Vella Lavella and 1-6% on Guadalcanal.⁷⁴ Fungal infections picked the most sensitive areas to make raw, invading the armpits and getting between the toes, into the groin and between the buttocks.⁷⁵ A small mite caused havoc on Stirling Island, biting around waistlines and boot tops. Bad ankle rashes were alleviated by clearing the camps of undergrowth.⁷⁶ On the Green Islands, dermatitis and septic sores were prevalent. A furry caterpillar which produced an irritating secretion afflicted the soldiers with skin problems.⁷⁷

The perceived unhealthiness of the South Pacific was mentioned regarding the deployment 2NZ Division. The Minister of Defence reported that 2NZ Division had

⁶⁹ When the Division deployed to New Caledonia in 1943 an outbreak of Dengue fever occurred and Bourail and Noumea were placed out of bounds. Mosquitoes breeding in the coastal marshes were impossible to eliminate and the best the Division could do was to use mosquito nets. Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15 Barrowclough to Army HQ, May 1943.

⁷⁰ On New Caledonia timber and flyproofing materials were scarce. Disinfectant was in short supply. Stout, p..26.

⁷¹ Stout, p.483.

⁷² Army Base Records, Personal File, William Cunningham.

⁷³ Stout, p.698.

⁷⁴ Stout, p.698.

⁷⁵ Cowdrey, p.64.

⁷⁶ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 139/1/42.

⁷⁷ Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 140/1/28.

heard of conditions in New Guinea and the Solomons and while he felt sure that they would serve where required, 'the majority given the option would prefer the healthier Middle Eastern theatre'.⁷⁸

Clean drinking water was essential to avoid typhoid, other waterborne diseases and dehydration. Accustomed to relatively free access to drinkable water, New Zealanders found water conservation difficult. In Fiji in 1941 8 Brigade encountered water usage problems, particularly in January, the hottest time of the year. Soldiers had three to four showers per day and some had showers at night because they could not sleep in the heat. Water consumption was approximately 80 gallons per day per man. Consequently, the Suva Reservoir became depleted and orders were issued to cut down water usage. Showers were cut off for periods of time.⁷⁹ On New Caledonia there were also water problems.⁸⁰ Supplies of water on Guadalcanal were limited and required co-operation from American units. Combat units on Vella Lavella had to practice water discipline, while those on Mono had access to streams. However, on the Green Islands had to be imported or distilled.⁸¹ The experience of 37 Battalion was typical. 'Water was still on the scarce list and we were still washing ourselves and our clothes in the sea or brackish water. We must have developed quite a distinctive aroma, but as we all smelt the same none of us noticed anything wrong. The engineers gave us very valuable help in constructing several wells and with the usual ingenuity of the average New Zealand soldier we rigged up showers - very brackish, but very welcome, nonetheless.'⁸²

The New Zealand Army realised that in order to sustain a fighting force in the tropics it needed to ensure that its soldiers were adequately fed. Problems arose with monotony

⁷⁸ Nancy Taylor, The Home Front, Volume I, Wellington: Historical Publications Branch, 1986, pp.716-7.

⁷⁹ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ, 121/9/B/3/1 Conference 9.

⁸⁰ One of the chief problems was a supply of good water – in spite of abundant rain and many rivers in that mineral-rich country, the mineral content of the water rendered it undrinkable. Supplies had to be brought in, in water carts and only the dental section was equipped with them. 'Barbara Bolt, Mail Call – New Zealanders at War in the Pacific'. The New Zealand Genealogist, March/April 2005, p.92.

⁸¹ 'On this coral atoll there were no streams and there were a number of condensers, petrol driven, converting sea water to 'fresh'. The many vehicles had first claim for their radiators and each man had a ration of a water bottle (I think). It rained heavily every morning and we would use it for a shower. It usually stopped just as you had soaped up! Bamboo guttering for our tents and empty petrol drums helped'. David William interview 2007. Author's Collection.

⁸² Pacific Saga, p.93.

of food, scarcity of fresh vegetables, reliance on dried food and resistance to food which differed markedly from what the soldiers were used to.⁸³

When B-Force deployed to Fiji there was an inadequacy of fresh vegetables and these had to be obtained from New Zealand. Potatoes were not able to be grown locally and the troops had to accept taro and other local foods.

Food tended to spoil rapidly in the tropics. The Americans were able to supply Allied troops with canned goods but there was 'consumer resistance' to things like Chili Con Carne. American 'C' and 'K' rations were supplied to New Zealand troops in the forward zone. These received mixed reviews.

The major problem confronting the logisticians was not that 3NZ Division was being deprived of food, but rather that food was being wasted because the soldiers viewed it as unpalatable. Nutrition impacted upon discipline.⁸⁴

The Army recognised that the nutritional value of the food supplied was not likely to result in healthy troops. There was an insufficiency of the fresh food and vegetables required to maintain good health and ward off disease. The troops' diet was high in protein and doubts arose as to the effect of it on their overall health. Generally the diet of the troops was unpopular but did them no discernible harm.⁸⁵

3NZ Division had the lowest VD rate of New Zealand land forces deployed overseas.⁸⁶ The reasons are obvious. There were few opportunities for fraternising with women in the South Pacific and the Army discouraged contact with the local population. There were few European women serving alongside the soldiers of 3NZ Division and European populations in the South Pacific were often standoffish. After the Americans

⁸³ New Zealand soldiers were used to bread and meat in their diets and the highly spiced, liquid foods they received in the South Pacific often produced dysentery. Archives NZ WAI, DAZ 156/1/28. At least one soldier in 29 Battalion died from what was thought to be food poisoning on New Caledonia in January 1943. The official diagnosis was 'dysentery'. Archives NZ WAI, 1, DAZ 121.4/1/15. See also Archives NZ, AD12, 28/15/2 Barrowclough to Army HQ 26 January 1943, Col Sugden reported the whole of one of his companies seriously ill after a meal and then a fatality.

⁸⁴ On New Caledonia complaints were made about New Zealand soldiers stealing from local gardens, stealing chickens and shooting cattle. These actions undoubtedly flowed from the lack of fresh meat and fruit provided to the soldiers. Archives NZ, WAI, DAZ 155/1/13 14 Brigade Routine Orders, 4, 22.

⁸⁵ Archives NZ, WAI 1, DAZ 121/4/1/26.

⁸⁶ McLeod, p.137; There were 44 cases of Gonorrhoea and two of Syphilis, Stout, p.83.

entered the war there was also competition from the better paid and better dressed Americans.⁸⁷

The Army limited contact with the local Fijian population. The soldiers of 3NZ Division were predominantly young men in their sexual prime. The lack of sexual outlets undoubtedly made their experience of the South Pacific more uncomfortable.

The Kiwi Concert Party (Pacific) toured the Pacific putting on over a hundred shows.⁸⁸ The female impersonators were immensely popular with New Zealand and American units.⁸⁹ A veteran recalled that they were shows done in good taste, unlike American USO shows which were smutty.⁹⁰

The New Zealanders did, however, get to see American movies care of their American hosts. 'It needed only one pair of chorus girl legs on the screen to create bedlam in the audience. Pathetic cries of 'Take me home' could be distinguished from other inarticulate groans.'⁹¹

The delicate issue of race relations was raised at a Brigade Conference in Fiji in 1941 by the RNZAF Commander who complained that New Zealand troops had been 'consorting with native women, giving New Zealand forces a bad name'. He wanted orders issued to ban fraternisation. Cunningham did not want the Army accused of having raised the colour question. He instructed his commanders to discuss the matter with their troops and explain why they were not allowed to fraternise freely with the natives.⁹²

⁸⁷ The Americans in the South Pacific had very low VD Rates. 'Contact with indigenous civilians was so circumscribed that venereal diseases were of little consequence.' Erik Bergerud, Touched with Fire, London: Penguin Books, 1996, p.102.

⁸⁸ Base Wallahs, p.157.

⁸⁹ 'Speciality : female impersonations', Pacific Service, p.55.

⁹⁰ Campbell Davie Interview, 2006.

⁹¹ Pacific Kiwis, p.47.

⁹² Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 121/9/b/3/1 Conference, 10, 24 January 1941.



Painting by Russell Clark, *Movies in the Rain, Malsi*. Archives NZ, AAAC 898, NCWA58

An indication of how the Army handled matters can be seen from the case of a 21 year old Private who wanted to marry a local half caste Fijian woman who was 'exceptionally dark'. His C.O. and other soldiers tried unsuccessfully to dissuade him. Two days before the marriage ceremony he was sent back to New Zealand.⁹³ A soldier of 30 Battalion in Fiji in 1941 recalls an officer being paraded before the troops having his epaulettes torn off and being sent home to New Zealand in disgrace. His offence was that he had been found in the native women's quarters.⁹⁴

Opportunities to interact with the native populations on Guadalcanal and Vella Lavella were severely limited. The natives on Mono Island kept their women away from the soldiers.⁹⁵ On the Green Islands there was little interaction with native women. The troops most likely to have had sexual activity were the units in Fiji and New

⁹³ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 121/9/B3/5

⁹⁴ Harry Bioletti - conversation 5 September 2006.

⁹⁵ Interview Bert Cowan.

Caledonia⁹⁶ where prostitution existed. Even then their opportunities would have been limited.⁹⁷

3NZ Division did field a female unit of base support staff, Kiwi Company.⁹⁸ There is no evidence of illicit sexual activity and the WAACS were well disciplined and useful.⁹⁹ WAACS were used as nurses, clerks, batwomen, telephone operators, laundry personnel, waitresses, cashiers and cooks. Most were attached to 4th General Hospital and 2nd NZ Convalescent Depot and Hospital at Kalavere. Others were attached to Base Training Depot and the Kiwi Club at Bourail. The WAACS shared the privations of their male counterparts - monotonous routine, uncomfortable tents, unpalatable food, mosquitoes and bugs, and a trying climate. The work was often hard - the laundry staff handled 4,000 items per week using petrol driven washing machines and irons¹⁰⁰ and the staff of the Kiwi Club served 200 cooked meals daily.¹⁰¹ The WAACS 'danced thousands of miles with men who could dance, couldn't dance and who 'hadn't seen a white woman for 12 months'.¹⁰² They also shared their male contemporary's risks. Lt. Col. J.H. Wood, the WAAC commander at 2nd NZ Convalescent Depot, took ill and died in January 1944. On 30 January 1944 Marcel Harnett was killed in a road accident.¹⁰³

The image of New Zealand troops in the South Pacific cavorting with promiscuous women, native or otherwise, is a myth. In most instances the soldiers of 3NZ Division engaged in far less sexual activities than their contemporaries. The South Pacific was not a sexual Mecca for New Zealand troops.

⁹⁶ The Maison Rose (Pink House) at Bourail, was the most famous. See Frederic Angleviel, 'New Zealanders in New Caledonia (Necal) during the Second World War (1942-1944)' in French Embassy, *60 Years Ago*, 2005, p.67. *Base Wallahs*, p.211.

⁹⁷ A New Zealand sergeant reporting on his visit to Houailou, New Caledonia, advised that the local policeman had arrested 8 native women on a charge of prostitution with Allied soldiers. The women were described as 'a repulsive looking lot' and 'all syphilitic', WWII, 1, DAZ 121/9/A8/2, Sgt. Spencer to DAAG 27 November 1943.

⁹⁸ 'These female volunteers were camped on the left bank of the Jane River at Bourail. This was kept separate by a footbridge ('the bridge of sighs') guarded by military police'. Frederic Angleviel, p.71.

⁹⁹ *Base Wallahs*, pp.142-151.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.144.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p.148.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p.148.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

In New Zealand society in the 20th Century alcohol played an important role and consumption of it in large quantities was reckoned as a mark of manliness. Illegal production of alcohol was also a marked feature of New Zealand society,¹⁰⁴ particularly on the West Coast of the South Island. For the soldiers of 3NZ Division, the problem with alcohol was generally a lack of it, particularly in the forward area. This led to creative experiments in illicit alcohol manufacture to make good the deficit.

Beer was part of the ration of 3NZ Division soldiers whilst in the Base Camps in New Caledonia and McLeod notes that ‘... many of the liquor problems focused on the New Zealand Forces Club (Bourail on New Caledonia). There were repeated drunken brawls, but at least it did keep the soldiers away from the less reputable areas.’¹⁰⁵ Barrowclough noted that ‘consignments have not been very frequent. Such beer as we have received has been very carefully apportioned’¹⁰⁶. Generally in the Solomons the beer ration was one can of beer per week.¹⁰⁷

‘Up Voh and Temala Way it was necessary during long droughts to try various substitutes. Raisins, sugar and yeast with the help of cook house staff were a useful line and when supplemented by fruit juice had astounding effects.’¹⁰⁸

‘A roaring trade in private stills and the problem of how to get the dollars back to New Zealand ...’¹⁰⁹ challenged kiwi ingenuity.

In March 1944, 2 Platoon, 4 NZ Motor Transport Company, based in the Treasury islands created an illicit still using drums and copper wiring. Raisins and sugar were fermented to produce alcohol. The product was either consumed or sold to neighbouring American units. The latter proved to be the New Zealanders undoing when American soldiers suffered the side effects and their officers located the still.

¹⁰⁴ Regulation of alcohol consumption vexed New Zealand authorities. See Taylor, Vol. II, pp.1014-1031. Sly grogging and illicit liquor production were a feature of New Zealand wartime existence.

¹⁰⁵ McLeod, p.136.

¹⁰⁶ Archives NZ, AD12, 87/12/1 Barrowclough to Army HQ, 1 May 1943. He also commented that one brand ‘Cascade’ was so bad ‘Men have been heard to say that they would rather go without than drink that particular brand’.

¹⁰⁷ David Williams – Interview, 2006. Author's Collection.

¹⁰⁸ Pacific Pioneers, p.110.

¹⁰⁹ Pacific Pioneers, p.112

Worse was to follow as a New Zealand Court of Enquiry discovered a number of other stills in the area.¹¹⁰

On New Caledonia the Army and French authorities had grave concerns about the sale of adulterated liquor to New Zealand soldiers. It was believed that local people were selling liquor with methylated spirits added.¹¹¹ Drunkenness underpinned most disciplinary problems on New Caledonia.¹¹²

The image of New Zealand troops whiling away their time at the foot of a coconut tree quaffing beer is therefore a false one.

Arguably, the most serious morale problem for 3NZ Division was the absence of facilities and entertainment. In order to preserve morale and discipline the officers of 3NZ Division had to keep their men occupied mentally and physically.

The experience of 30 Battalion was typical. The description of the experience at Momi Bay in Fiji in 1941 captures the problem -

‘The soul-searing monotony of life was relieved only by mail days. Of entertainment there was none and only a varied assortment of rumours gave a fillip to the deadly sameness of garrison duties. The food was poor and if leave was available where could one go? There was nothing to do but get up in the morning, throw on a pair of mud bespattered shorts or underpants, a pair of boots (socks for ‘cissies’) and dig and sweat, and swat the mosquitoes that drove one to distraction. But if life was dour, and it was easy for everyone to fall victims to apathy or what the Fijians call malua, there always prevailed that camaraderie among the boys which produced laughs and good natured banter; that feeling which allowed them to become enured to tinned yellowtail for breakfast, to kumala, dala and tough stringy beans, to sweating by day and night,

¹¹⁰ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 151/9/3 Proceedings of Court of Inquiry, 24 April 1944.

¹¹¹ Archives NZ, WAI, 1 DAZ 121/9/A8-2, Brigadier Officer in charge of Admin. NZEFIP 2HQ Island Command, 25 October 43.

¹¹² Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 121/9/a82 Discipline.

to long intervals between mail days, to bouts of dysentery and the pin pricks of communal life.’¹¹³

Matters did not improve as the Battalion moved northwards. On Vella Lavella after combat had ceased the battalion went into garrison mode. ‘If you didn’t play cards, write, read or ‘mag’ you devoted your time to resting - the most popular pastime in the Third Division, irrespective of rank, commonly called ‘cot bashing’, ‘Maori PT’ (physical training), ‘ceiling inspection’, or ‘spinal exercise’ - all sooner or later succumbed to its wiles.’¹¹⁴

After combat ended on the Green Islands, the battalion settled into ‘another one of those dreary waiting periods which men of the 3rd Division had come to know so well. You looked at the well-handled photo of the wife on the ration-box dressing table and thought’, ‘It won’t be long soon’. When not on working parties over at the other side of the lagoon the boys squelched round the muddy area in underpants and boots, the almost uniform dress of officers and men alike, dropping into tents to hear the latest rumours or hieing off down to the YMCA tent for a cup of stewed tea. Cards - cribbage and bridge - occupied leisure hours and the reading of well thumbed magazines and out of date newspapers.’¹¹⁵

On New Caledonia 'picture shows were long a great want'. When the 16mm sets arrived they were found to be faulty and repairs had to be improvised¹¹⁶.

Frank Cooze described his sojourn on New Caledonia with his anti-aircraft unit as ‘ten months of soul destroying boredom on that Pacific paradise - one time French penal settlement.’¹¹⁷ ‘Life in the gunpost was very monotonous’.¹¹⁸ His unit travelled to Mono Island and ‘settled down gradually to the usual humdrum island existence.’¹¹⁹

¹¹³ The Third Division Histories Committee, Pacific Kiwis, Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1947, p.23.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.78.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.124.

¹¹⁶ Archives NZ, AD 28/15/1 Barrowclough to Army HQ, 1 May 1943.

¹¹⁷ Frank Cooze, Kiwis in the Pacific, Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1945, p.13.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.25.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.43.

Commanders attempted to combat boredom by organising sporting activities such as boxing and swimming¹²⁰. Barrowclough instituted 'The Barrowclough Cup' for rugby between the Division's units. Leave in the South Pacific was extremely limited¹²¹. In contrast with their compatriots in 2NZ Division who were able to explore cities and see the sights there was virtually nothing to be seen of interest in the South Pacific. Leave to New Zealand was only granted on compassionate grounds.

One of the problems confronting the soldiers of 3NZ Division was that their division was deployed in fragments strung out over considerable areas. Roads and tracks were often sparse or non-existent. Consequently, in the forward areas there was little communication between units and exchange of information. For example, the death of soldiers from American strafing was not known to units on the Treasury Islands.¹²²

Because port facilities were often poor or non-existent in the South Pacific this posed acute problems for the Allies. To sustain men and equipment cargo handling facilities had to be created or solutions extemporised. For many of the men of 3NZ Division this resulted in hard physical labour as wharves and jetties were created or supplies were transported from ship to shore. This often entailed unloading large seagoing vessels into smaller craft for shipment to shore.

By mid 1943 Guadalcanal had been developed into a major supply base. Labour to handle cargo was always chronically short. After completing the Bougainville Campaign, the Third Marine Division was returned to Guadalcanal to supply 1,000 men a day for working parties. It was inevitable that New Zealanders would have to do such work.

Men from infantry units were used for cargo handling but the units most heavily involved were the Engineers. On New Caledonia the Engineers had to unload the

¹²⁰ Archives NZ, AD 28/15/1 Barrowclough to Army HQ, 1 May 1943. Barrowclough reported that on New Caledonia 'The recreational facilities are not ideal... All formations have held sports meetings including all athletic events and swimming sports as well as cricket and football matches'.

¹²¹ Archives NZ, AD12, 87/21/1 Barrowclough to Army HQ 1 May 1943 Barrowclough commented that leave was one of the greatest problems on New Caledonia because '...there is no single village which offers any attraction to the soldier. Noumea itself has little of interest or entertainment...'

¹²² Interview David Williams, 2006.

Division's equipment quickly because only one boat could dock at Nepoul at a time.¹²³ On Vella Lavella a wharf was constructed to utilise a captured Japanese barge. This entailed blowing up underwater coral. Similar activities were carried out on Nissan. Nissan was supplied by Liberty ships which could not penetrate the lagoon. This required transshipment by LCTs. To ease matters, docks were created by the Engineers. Cranes and specialised equipment were in short supply. American officers observing the construction of dock facilities at Halis on the Green Islands were amazed that the logs for cribbing 'were handed not by cranes but by submersible sappers.'¹²⁴ The role of the Engineers was much wider and encompassed road construction, water supply, fortifications and accommodation, generally under trying and uncomfortable conditions.

The conditions faced by troops undertaking cargo handling were often dangerous for the inexperienced and at the very least entailed heavy, arduous work. One veteran recounts how his men were used by American forces on Guadalcanal to handle the disposal of chemical warfare ammunition which had become hazardous. The ammunition was loaded onto barges and then disposed at sea.¹²⁵

The combat environment faced by Allied troops in the Solomon Islands was nightmarish. Heat, rain, harsh terrain, vegetation and deadly flora and fauna produced a situation where more energy had to be applied to fighting the environment than the Japanese. There were few environments more hostile to 20th Century warfare than the Solomon Islands. The humidity of the jungle conditions produced decay and a powerful stench. Tropical rain came down in sheets, penetrating straight through clothing 'splashing on your skin, but brings little or no refreshment.'¹²⁶ Instead, it produced 'mud up to your ankles and where you go down to get the water, up to your calves'.¹²⁷

The triple canopy jungle allowed little light to penetrate. At night there were 'no outlines; only more solid lumps of blackness ...'¹²⁸ Relatively quiet during the day, the jungle came alive at night. 'As night falls the hitherto silent jungle finds a multitude of

¹²³ Pacific Pioneers, pp.66-7.

¹²⁴ Ibid, p.68.

¹²⁵ Harry Bioletti – Letter 2007. Author's Collection.

¹²⁶ The 37th, p.68.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid, p.69

voices. Then there is every kind of bird or insect or reptile that clicks or scuffles, whistles or hiccups, mockingly or threateningly.’¹²⁹ On Vella Lavella Barrowclough commented ‘The noises in the jungle at night have to be heard to be believed. Every conceivable kind of bird, insect and frog joins in a chorus immediately after nightfall, which drowns every other sound except gunfire.’¹³⁰ On Mono there was a large land crab that rubbed its claws together making sounds reminiscent of a rifle bolt being drawn back. For troops exposed to combat for the first time nerves were drawn taut. Digging fox holes or defensive positions was often difficult. Sometimes coral lay below the surface, sometimes tangles of roots. Foxholes were apt to fill with water and mud. ‘The mud around the foxholes smelt of sweat, excrement and death.’¹³¹ ‘Lying down at the bottom of the hole, the heat is oppressive; there is no position of comfort and it is difficult to sleep ...’¹³² One veteran described the difficulty of digging foxholes on his first night on Mono due to coral and tree roots.¹³³

In jungle warfare the rules of linear warfare do not apply. Defences have to cover 360 degrees. The Japanese were adept at jungle warfare and infiltration of positions. They had developed tactics and gained experience in their strike¹³⁴. The New Zealanders had no experience of jungle war and had to undertake the same learning curve as the Australians and Americans. Valuable lessons were learned from 14 Brigade’s experiences on Vella Lavella, particularly the effective use of mortar and artillery fire and the importance of aggressive patrolling.

The humidity of jungle conditions made communications difficult. Radio sets were often rendered inoperable and communications reduced to laid field telephone cable or runner.

Humidity and the harsh physical work of traversing jungle made food and water supplies critical. Again, the New Zealand Army had to ‘learn on the job’. The

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ AD 12, 28/15/1 - Pt. 4 Operation Kiwi, Barrowclough Army HQ NZ, 20 September 1943.

¹³¹ Ibid., p.69.

¹³² Ibid., p.70.

¹³³ Allan Rogers – Interview 20 September 2006. Author's Collection.

¹³⁴ J.P. Cross, Jungle Warfare – Experiences and Encounters, London: Guild Publishing, 1989, p.27.

experience of route marches and training exercises on relatively benign New Caledonia helped.

In the Solomons there were no safe areas, even for units considered to be non-combatant. The Post Office unit on Stirling Island was hit by a bomb' which struck the coconut trees above, shattering the tent and sorting cases, letters ripped to shreds. Luckily no one was wounded as they dived into the nearby foxhole. In a couple of days the office was again in operation. When asked if they wanted to be relieved the men's answer was a decided 'no we'll stick it out'¹³⁵.

Those exposed to combat who saw their comrades killed or maimed, no doubt suffered the effects in their civilian lives. Post war New Zealand unfortunately offered little for those suffering what would later be described as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.¹³⁶

The New Zealanders were fortunate to have been allowed the time to train for jungle warfare and to be acclimatised at the advance base at Guadalcanal before being committed to combat. They were also fortunate to have superb logistical and medical support which enabled them to operate in the lethal environment of jungle warfare. In addition, the New Zealanders were fortunate in facing limited numbers of Japanese who were sometimes second line troops and generally considerably out-numbered by their Allied opponents. These elements of good fortune were the outcome of careful planning and consideration and in no way detract from the New Zealanders' success in combat operations in the Solomons.

The injuries suffered by soldiers reflected the close quarter nature of jungle warfare - bullet, bayonet and grenade wounds. Limb wounds occurred in half the casualties handled by medical units with head wounds accounting for a quarter, and chest and back wounds accounting for the rest.¹³⁷ Rifle wounds comprised 40% of injuries,

¹³⁵ Barbara Bolt Mail Call – New Zealanders at War in the Pacific', The New Zealand Genealogist, March/April 2005, p.94.

¹³⁶ Alison Parr, Silent Casualties – New Zealand's Unspoken Legacy of the Second World War; Birkenhead: Tandem Press, 1995. Not one of Parr's seven case studies involved a Pacific veteran but there is no reason to suppose that the effects of combat in the South Pacific were any less traumatic than North Africa or Italy.

¹³⁷ Stout, p.74.

grenades 18% and mortar rounds 24%.¹³⁸ The battle casualties of the Division amounted to 85 killed, 12 died of wounds and 189 wounded.¹³⁹ The recovery rate for wounded was high, a testament to the excellent medical services provided.¹⁴⁰

Medical units in the Solomons faced challenges different from Europe. Generally there was an absence of wheeled transport and units had to adapt planes, ships, barges and hand transport for casualties. The practice was to establish hospitals within hours of an invasion. On the Treasury Islands field surgical units landed at 7am shortly after the first wave of troops and provided prompt surgical facilities. This played a considerable role in limiting fatalities.¹⁴¹

Throughout the battles for the Solomon Islands the Japanese consistently fought doggedly, brutally and skilfully. The New Zealanders faced Imperial Japanese Army and Navy units and these were formidable and deadly opponents.¹⁴² The Japanese units in the Solomons were often battle hardened from combat in China. They were imbued with the spirit of Bushido and did not fight according to the accepted western norms. Japan had become increasingly militaristic and nationalistic in the 1930's and early 1940's. Its commanders believed that superior Japanese spirit would overcome any western material advantage. Westerners were believed to be effete. Surrender was forbidden by Imperial Rescript. It was not an option for the Japanese soldier because it entailed complete disgrace and social ostracism for the individual and his family. The Japanese Army fostered brutality as part of its discipline. Prisoners were therefore treated with contempt.¹⁴³

The soldiers of 3NZ Division deployed as 'soldier companions' to civilian post and telegraph radio operators discovered the vagaries of Japanese behaviour soon after capture. Most of these coastwatchers were sent to P.O.W. camps or work camps in Asia. Those unfortunate enough to be grouped together on Tarawa were beheaded.

¹³⁸ Ibid., p.75.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p.74.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid

¹⁴¹ Archives NZ, DA 428/3/2 Casualty Rate, 4 July 1944.

¹⁴² Gordon L. Rottman, *Japanese Army in World War II, Conquest of the Pacific 1941-42*, Oxford: Osprey Publishing 2005.

¹⁴³ Meirion and Susie Harries, *Soldiers of the Sun*, New York: Random House, 1991 pp.475-84.

These soldier companions became the first casualties and Prisoners of War of 3NZ Division. The Prisoners of War had a particularly grim war.¹⁴⁴

On Vella Lavella New Zealand units were enveloped and almost overrun. Casualties were taken and Red Cross and medical units were fired upon. A New Zealand sergeant was captured by the Japanese, strung up to a tree and bayoneted¹⁴⁵. The body was later recovered.¹⁴⁶ By 1942 word of Japanese atrocities had reached the Allies and it was clear that the war in the Pacific was not going to be a chivalric contest.

Operations on Vella Lavella were focused on mopping up Japanese units. These fought doggedly and were pushed by 14 Brigade to the north of the island. Few Japanese prisoners were taken. The Japanese were successful in evacuating their forces. On the Treasury Islands the New Zealanders faced composite Imperial Japanese Naval Land Forces. Prisoners were taken but most of the Japanese defenders were wiped out.¹⁴⁷ The Japanese defenders on the Green Islands fought desperately and were wiped out.

New Zealand soldiers were willing to accept Japanese surrender¹⁴⁸ but generally this was not contemplated by the Japanese. There seems to have been little of the hatred of the Japanese that American units had.

To be effective a military unit has to have cohesion and discipline. The soldiers of 3NZ Division were, with rare exceptions, not professional soldiers but rather civilians prepared to be soldiers for the duration of the war. The same held true of most of the soldiers in 2NZ Division, including Charles Upham, VC & Bar. However, 2NZ Division had a higher proportion of professional soldiers in its ranks. It was doubly hard to maintain discipline when the Division was in a static garrison role which for many seemed to lack purpose. Officers struggled to maintain discipline and morale.

¹⁴⁴ W. Wynne Mason, *Prisoners of War*, Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1954, pp.160-161.

¹⁴⁵ Archives NZ WA II, 1, DAZ 121/9/18/1/4A

¹⁴⁶ Narrative, Gordon Graham 2007. It was believed that as each Japanese soldier passed they bayoneted the body.

¹⁴⁷ A veteran describes his unit taking casualties and having to wipe out Japanese defenders entrenched in rifle pits on Mono. No prisoners were taken. Allan Rogers Interview, 20 September 2006.

¹⁴⁸ Cowan Interviews.

Difficulties in discipline became evident as soon as B-Force was deployed. Cunningham complained about soldiers failing to salute officers, officers and men fraternising informally, drunkenness and lack of smartness with uniforms.

The difficulty with imposing discipline in the combat zone is that insubordination strikes at the root of discipline and can be incredibly corrosive of unit morale. Bill Ashton recounts an incident on Vella Lavella immediately after combat had ceased where a soldier in his battery refused an officer's order to clean his rifle. The response resulted in a charge of refusing to obey an order and using insulting language to an officer. An armed trooper was detailed to guard the miscreant. The Staff Sergeant Major attempted to get the soldier to clear a track using a grubber but his order was defied. 'And how did it end? When a trooper refuses to obey any order out in the bush like that, what can 'they' do, nothing.' He was taken back to his rest area where he was guarded and eventually 'it fizzled out and he merged back into his normal duties.'¹⁴⁹

Options were however, open to military authorities, even in the forward area which were extremely unpleasant. Barrowclough had to remonstrate with his officers and urge them to impose only humane punishments on offenders. Barrowclough had been disturbed at the sight of soldiers incarcerated in wire cages.¹⁵⁰ In addition, military prisons operated on New Caledonia where soldiers could be sentenced to hard labour.¹⁵¹ Commanding officers had the power to award up to 28 days detention and/or forfeiture of pay. If matters were really serious they could apply for a Court Martial of the offender.¹⁵² There were no summary executions in 3NZ Division.

Campbell Davie, a veteran of both 2 & 3NZ Divisions commented that discipline in 3NZ Division was superior to that of 2NZ Division and the officers in his Field Battery were generally respected and obeyed.¹⁵³

An examination of the files relating to discipline and Court Martials in 3NZ Division reveals that offending against military discipline was not a significant factor. Offences

¹⁴⁹ Bill Ashton, *Narrative*, Author's Collection, pp.30-31.

¹⁵⁰ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 121/9/2, Barrowclough, 19 October 1943.

¹⁵¹ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 121/9/A8/1 Discipline, Detention Barracks.

¹⁵² Archives NZ, WAI, 1, DAZ 113/9/5 Court Martial, Brigadier Dove, 20 November 1943.

¹⁵³ Campbell Davie Interview, 2006.

were mainly low-key things such as being improperly dressed,¹⁵⁴ being grossly intoxicated and petty thefts. One soldier deserted from New Caledonia simply by boarding an American ship and travelling to Auckland. There were few instances of desertion. Some New Zealanders did become involved in criminal activity with American soldiers on New Caledonia. Much of the crime was alcohol based. The impression created by an examination of the files relating to discipline and conduct is that the New Zealand Army had matters very well under control.

The soldiers of 3NZ Division were overwhelmingly civilians who had entered the Army 'for the duration' and who would return to civilian life in the post-war world. As such, they reflected New Zealand's contemporary values and very few of them were involved in criminal activity or rejected Army discipline.

In June 1944 when the process of reducing the size of 3NZ division began in earnest the Division's units were spread out across the South Pacific. 8 Brigade was concentrated on the Treasury Islands, 14 Brigade was concentrated on the Green Islands and Divisional base units were located on Guadalcanal and New Caledonia. It was simply impossible to return the whole of 3NZ Division to New Zealand in one group. Decisions regarding the overall fate of the Division were deferred until September 1944 but regular levies of soldiers were withdrawn from the Division and despatched to New Zealand. The result was that the soldiers of 3NZ Division were returned to New Zealand in small groups. A consequence of that was that there were no victory parades, no brass bands and welcoming crowds. The men returned to New Zealand and were either absorbed into the civilian economy, or alternatively, despatched as reinforcements for 2NZ Division. No attempt was made to thank the men for their contribution to victory in the Pacific, let alone explain to them what they had achieved.

There were practical reasons why the Division was returned piecemeal. Barrowclough was concerned that too large a contingent of troops would place strain on the ferries and

¹⁵⁴ 'Improperly dressed for Church parade', "Improperly dressed whilst in Bourail'. These often consisted of the soldier having his sleeves rolled up, shirt buttoned and wearing shorts. One instance which caused considerable embarrassment was a soldier who happened to be at the Noumea Wharves at the time an official party, including the New Zealand Minister of Defence, arrived. The soldier's appearance was felt to be a slur on the Division and action against him was demanded. Archives NZ, WAI, 1 DAZ 121/9/A8-2.

rail system.¹⁵⁵ Also, shipping space was limited and the Division was dependant upon the Americans to arrange shipping. Operational security prevented publication of shipping movements.

On their return to New Zealand units were spread around various Army camps. The most cogent evidence of the Division's return were the vehicle parks established at Papakura.

When the Division returned to New Zealand the war against Germany was still in full flow and it seemed as though 1945 would be the year of operations against Japan. Victory parades were therefore premature. By the time Japan did surrender in August 1945 3NZ Division was a distant memory.¹⁵⁶

The experience of 2NZ Division differed in that its men were returned to New Zealand on troopships and there were welcoming crowds. Considerable publicity followed the return of 2NZ Division to New Zealand. Some of the men of 2NZ Division took part in the victory celebrations in London and were reviewed by the King and Churchill. They therefore had a sense of solidarity, accomplishment and pride in what they had achieved. The men of 3NZ Division were robbed of this and their experiences began their slide into obscurity.

Perhaps sensing that his Division's history would be swept into the dustbin of history, Barrowclough attempted to memorialise what his men had accomplished in a series of 13 volumes of unofficial histories prepared by the men themselves and distributed to each veteran. The Army Board in 1944-5 also published two volumes on the New Zealand contribution in the Pacific. The veterans would, however, have to wait for Owen Gillespie's 'The Pacific' for the 'Official History'. Even then, his volume dealt with garrison units, Fijian Commandos and the air and naval aspects, rather than focusing on 3NZ Division. This contrasted with the regular appearance in the post war world of volumes dedicated to individual units of 2NZ division, including even the Petrol Company.

¹⁵⁵ Archives NZ, WAI, 1, S9 Barrowclough Papers 1944.

¹⁵⁶ The New Zealand representative at the signing of the Japanese surrender on the USS Missouri was not a veteran of 3NZ Division, but rather Air Vice Marshall Isitt.

Complicating loyalties was the fact that veterans of 3NZ Division, including Barrowclough, had served in 2NZ Division. As Campbell Davie relates, he was proud to have served in both.¹⁵⁷

For some soldiers of 3NZ Division there were pleasant moments. Army life appealed to some as did the chance to escape a humdrum civilian life. Some enjoyed their sojourn in the South Pacific.

Bill Ashton recalls that he had 'an enjoyable war' because his time in the Army involved 'new experiences' and skills that would have been unavailable to him as a plasterer.¹⁵⁸ Fiji was 'exotic' and he experienced camaraderie in his artillery unit.

For Arthur Richardson his time as a clerk with B-Force in Fiji in 1941 provided a pleasant interlude before being sent to North Africa as an artilleryman and being wounded in the Tunisian Campaign. He found Christian fellowship with his fellow soldiers and the local people and had plenty of time for sports. He had taken his golf clubs from New Zealand and enjoyed golf, tennis and swimming.¹⁵⁹

George Hodgson, the commander of a mobile unit attached to 8 Brigade HQ, found his time in Fiji had its lighter moments. His unit was tasked with patrolling along stretches of the Fijian coastline. The monotony was relieved in the late afternoons when the unit would lager its vehicles and have a BBQ on the beach. Later, on Mono Island his men had a sail boat for recreation.¹⁶⁰

Campbell Davie, an Op Sig with an 8 Brigade Artillery Battery recalls that his call-up freed him from his family drapery business, and set his life on a new course. He enjoyed the Army, especially the camaraderie - 'we were all in it together and the worse the conditions got, the more witty remarks, the more the fun came out.'¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ Campbell Davie Interview, 2006. Author's Collection.

¹⁵⁸ Bill Ashton, Narrative, 1997, p.1. Author's Collection.

¹⁵⁹ Interview with Arthur Richardson, 2004. Author's Collection.

¹⁶⁰ Interview with George Hodgson, 2003.

¹⁶¹ Campbell Davie Interview, 2006.

For Allan Rogers, a Lieutenant with 36 Battalion, there were dark moments such as the death of soldiers in his unit, but there was also camaraderie and a sense of adventure.¹⁶²

The experiences of individual members of 3NZ Division varied. Generally, life was more pleasant in the base areas and the degree of hardship increased as units moved further northwards from New Zealand. Soldiers were killed as a result of accidents, combat and disease. The stress of combat inevitably took its toll. 3NZ Division was deployed in the South Pacific for a serious purpose.

Whilst the soldiers of 3NZ Division were not in combat for the same duration as their contemporaries in 2NZ Division, nonetheless, they faced privations and discomforts on a level which were comparable with or even exceeded those of 2NZ Division. With the exception of Norfolk Island the places to which 3NZ Division's soldiers were deployed entailed a high degree of personal discomfort and presented challenges to them. The jibe of the soldiers being 'coconut bombers' and having sat out the real war in a Pacific idyll is completely without foundation.

¹⁶² Allan Rogers Interview, 20 September 2006.

CHAPTER 8: LEGACY

From 1940 to 1944 New Zealand invested substantial manpower and resources in land operations in the South Pacific. This chapter will examine the legacy of that investment. It argues that the impact of 3NZ Division was localised and left few legacies in the post-war world. The reasons for this will be canvassed.

An immediate effect of the disbandment of 3NZ Division was the transfer of many of its personnel to 2NZ Division in Italy. 3NZ Division was effectively cannibalised so 2NZ Division could remain an effective formation. 2NZ Division had been in fairly constant combat since its arrival in Italy in 1943, with attritional battles such as Monte Cassino reminiscent of World War I. Even Freyberg recognised that 2NZ Division needed to be withdrawn. The official history of the Italian Campaign notes:

The Division underwent some fundamental changes in its composition and organisation in February (1945). Long-servicemen were withdrawn to return to New Zealand with the Tongariro draft, and were replaced by men who had served with 3NZ Division in the Pacific and by other reinforcements. The infantry strength of the Division was increased by the formation of 9 Infantry Brigade.¹

It was hoped that a completely reorganised division would be in existence by April 1945.² The scheme began with the arrival of the 13th Reinforcements in Egypt on 5 November 1944 followed by the 14th Reinforcements (3,675 of which 2,115 were ex 3NZ Division) on 29 January 1945. Christopher Pugsley considers 'Freyberg was fortunate in the calibre of the ex-3 Division men. They had the experience necessary to replace the officers and N.C.O.'s going home'.³

The reinforcements from 3NZ Division revitalised 2NZ Division.⁴ John Crawford considers 'the well trained and highly motivated 3 Division personnel sent to Italy

¹ Robin Langford Kay, From Cassino to Trieste, Wellington: Historical Publications Branch, 1967, pp.384.

² Ibid.

³ Christopher Pugsley, 'The Second New Zealand Division of 1945' in John Crawford (ed.), Kia Kaha - New Zealand in the Second World War, Auckland: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp.94-106, pp.97-98.

⁴ Replacements from New Zealand also infused 2NZ Division. However, if 3NZ Division had been in existence it could have had a claim on such replacements.

played a central part in rejuvenating 2 New Zealand Division and in its highly successful offensive across northern Italy in 1945'.⁵ They meant that 2NZ Division could take part in offensive operations and be part of the drive on Trieste.⁶ One veteran recalled that soldiers in 2NZ Division welcomed him and other veterans from 3NZ Division because they were so short of men.⁷ Other veterans had less cordial welcomes.

Barrowclough had ensured that the men in his Division were well trained and this undoubtedly helped in their integration⁸. The feared surplus of officers was dealt with by several 3NZ Division officers volunteering to drop a grade in rank to serve in 2NZ Division,⁹ though this was a poor reward for service in the Pacific and sent a message regarding the relative importance of the two divisions. For those officers who wanted to further their careers in the New Zealand Army there was recognition that service in Europe was the key to advancement. For Barrowclough there were no command opportunities in 2NZ Division. Freyberg was not about to hand command to him and he was eventually despatched to Montgomery's 21st Army Headquarters as an observer.¹⁰

The main reason why 3NZ Division had been disbanded was supposedly the acute manpower crisis New Zealand was facing particularly in the agricultural and industrial areas. Those soldiers who were not sent to 2NZ Division in Italy were often demobilised and manpowered into essential industries. For many their demobilisation simply meant that they merged back into the civilian life from which they had come. Some spent time in agricultural work or dairy factories before resuming their careers in the post-war world. Yet it is possible that the demobilised soldiers of 3NZ Division had no significant impact in the agricultural¹¹ and industrial sectors. There was certainly

⁵ Crawford (ed.), Kia Kaha, p.157.

⁶ Kay.

⁷ Campbell Davie Interview, 2006. Author's Collection.

⁸ Techniques developed by Artillery Units in the South Pacific proved useful in Italy. Alan Henderson, David Green, and Peter Cooke, The Gunners, A History of New Zealand Artillery, North Shore, Auckland: Penguin Group, 2008, p 343.

⁹ For example Lt. Col Brydon had to drop in rank to that of a Major in order to serve in an artillery unit in 2NZ Division. Archives, NZ, AD12, 28/2 Officers ex-3NZ Division – Report by H.E. Barrowclough.

¹⁰ Archives NZ, AD12, 28/2 Report by Major General H.E. Barrowclough on his visit to Honolulu, 2NZ Division and 21 Army Group October 1944–April 1945.

¹¹ Gillespie notes that 'the response by the farming community was the most disappointing. By 10 May only about 1,000 men of an estimated 7,000 had been asked for by the farmers...', The Pacific, p.203.

wastage of manpower with farmers being offered more labour than they could use.¹² Ironically, whilst the soldiers of 3NZ Division were being directed into industry,¹³ 'industry was repeatedly being combed through to find fit men suitable for armed service who could be taken into the forces without hampering essential production'.¹⁴

The veterans of 3NZ Division often figured prominently in post-war New Zealand. The discipline and skills they learned served many of them well in their civilian lives. Harold Barrowclough became Chief Justice from 1953-1965. He was instrumental in setting up the Court of Appeal,¹⁵ and presiding over a period 'momentous' in the development of the judicial system. In the political sphere John ('Jack') Marshall, a Company Commander in 36 Battalion, was to become a New Zealand Prime Minister in 1972.¹⁶ His nemesis Robert Muldoon was with 37 Battalion and became part of the New Caledonia Garrison Headquarters Intelligence Unit.¹⁷ Walter.S. MacKinnon, served with an AA unit and later became a Major General and Commander of the New Zealand Army. He became the Patron of 3rd NZ Division Association. Guy Powles, New Zealand's first Ombudsman, had served with 144th Independent Battery as Lt Colonel. Leo Kermode would become a Brigadier. Frank Rennie would have a distinguished career as a 'regular soldier' rising to the rank of Colonel.

For the approximately 20,000 New Zealand men of 3NZ Division their deployment overseas had in many instances been the making of them by presenting them with skills and opportunities. It had also made them aware of the Pacific Islands to the north of New Zealand, places which they would have been hard put to find on a map prior to 1941. For others there was the bitter legacy of broken health from tropical diseases. New Zealand's casualties in the South Pacific were mercifully small. However, the loss of each of the soldiers killed in the South Pacific had a huge impact on their families

¹² J.V.T Baker, War Economy; Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1965, p.493 The estimates of labour required for the farming sector proved too high. Instead of 7,000 men for dairying in July 1944 only 4,286 were able to be placed.

¹³ Of the 17,134 men of 3NZ Division by the end of November 1944, 9,100 men were involved in industry mainly farming, building and construction work. Baker, p.496.

¹⁴ Baker, p.497.

¹⁵ Robin Cooke (Ed) Portrait of A Profession, Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1969 p.209.

¹⁶ John Marshall, Memoirs Volume One: 1912 to 1960, Auckland: Collins, 1983, pp.64-72.

¹⁷ Barry Gustafson, His Way, Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2000, pp.36-37.

and friends, spanning the generations.¹⁸

Prior to 1939, apart from Samoa and the Cook Islands, New Zealand had little direct relationship with the Pacific Islands. The defence of what were British possessions was seen as a problem for Britain and more particularly the Royal Navy. New Zealand found itself taking over extensive, and to a large extent, unwanted British defence responsibilities in the South Pacific because of the strategic importance of the area to New Zealand. The need to secure strategic points spanned Norfolk Island, Tonga, Tahiti, Samoa, New Caledonia and the Solomon Islands. Although those defence responsibilities for New Zealand may have been short term, they are significant. At one point it was contemplated that New Zealand take over Norfolk Island from Australia.¹⁹ Certainly Wellington in 1944 contemplated a far more vigorous Australasian voice in the South Pacific and a strong awareness of the strategic importance of the islands to the north has remained.

As the decolonisation of the Pacific took place in the 1960s and 1970s, New Zealand officials found themselves dealing with officials of Pacific Island nations who had a favourable recollection of New Zealand's deployment. Even the good relationship between 3NZ Division and the French administration on New Caledonia had potential political resonance. 3NZ Division was one of the first significant deployments of New Zealand forces into the South Pacific.²⁰ Recently there have again been such deployments to Guadalcanal, Bougainville and East Timor. The goodwill created by 3NZ Division has been a tangible asset for their successors. On Falamai the men from 8 Brigade rebuilt the church,²¹ and in the post-war years provided scholarships for the islanders²². On a visit to Mono Island in 2003 a New Zealand Ministerial delegation was welcomed and the recapture of the island was recalled. When Major Richard

¹⁸ Some 200 killed as a result of combat and 213 wounded. Archives NZ WAI, 1, DA407, 33/2 Casualties 3 Division, 24 January 1945. There were however, other non-combat casualties ranging from road accidents, drowning, explosion of lamps, and tropical illnesses for which statistics are not available.

¹⁹ Archives NZ, EA1 86/20/2, Norfolk Island assumption of Defence. The inhabitants were considered to be Polynesians having greater kinship with New Zealand.

²⁰ Samoa 1914 and Fiji 1921 were precedents.

²¹ Third Division Histories Committee, Stepping Stones to the Solomons; Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1947, Chapter 8, 'Church of Remembrance', pp.70-71.

²² Veterans from 36 Battalion established the Mono Trust Fund which provided cash grants to the island primary school, funds to allow islanders to seek higher education, the provision of water supply for Falamai, sports equipment and books.

Taylor of the New Zealand Army visited Nissan in 2002 he was met by locals with copies of the unofficial Histories and they proceeded to give him a guided tour showing where the fighting had occurred.²³ New Caledonia, with its cemetery for New Zealand war dead at Bourail has had a special connection. Regular visits have been made by veterans and the New Zealand Army and ceremonies held on Anzac Day.²⁴

For Fiji the impact of 3NZ Division was profound. The Fijian Defence Force (FDF) is effectively the child of 3NZ Division. Ironically it was the one offspring of 3NZ Division that was not disbanded in 1944.²⁵ In 1939 the Fiji Military Forces had consisted of a Force Headquarters and a Territorial Battalion. By the end of the war it had grown to an Infantry Brigade Group, a Heavy Artillery Regiment and various supporting units.²⁶ The official history notes that 'Emphasis must be placed on New Zealand's contribution to the defence of Fiji, particularly in the earlier stages of the war, and to the provision of materials and technical personnel without whom little would have been accomplished.'²⁷

The officers and NCOs of the Fijian Military Forces during World War II were overwhelmingly personnel seconded from 3NZ Division²⁸ and a chapter of the Official History, The Pacific, is devoted to the Fijians.²⁹ With the arrival of New Zealand troops on 1 November 1940 Brigadier Cunningham became Commandant FDF.³⁰ The provisioning of Fijian troops became the responsibility of the NZ Army Service Corps.³¹ As the New Zealand forces grew to brigade strength the FDF came under the operational control of 8 Brigade.³² The Fijian Commandos were trained and led

²³ Conversation with Richard Taylor, 27 January 2006.

²⁴ For a description of commemorative activities see Gordon Graham, Anzac Delegation 3NZ Division Association Newsletter, No 26 – 1991, pp.6-11.

²⁵ One historian considers 'The Republic of Fiji Military Forces is a New Zealand made product'. John Tonkin-Covell 'The Very Long Way Back: The Republic of Fiji Military Forces and the Neutrality Convention' in New Zealand Journal of Defence Studies Vol 1, March 2007, p11.

²⁶ R.A. Howlett, The History of the Fiji Military Forces 1939-1945, Fiji: Government Printer, 1948, p.13.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid, 2nd NZEF Officers who served with the FMF, pp.166-173.

²⁹ Gillespie, pp.261-272. There is no similar chapter for the Solomon Islands Defence Force, because they came under British aegis.

³⁰ Howlett, pp.17-18.

³¹ Ibid p.18.

³² Ibid p.23.

mainly by New Zealanders.³³ Specialist units such as First Field Company, Fiji Corps of Engineers, First Brigade Section Fiji Corps of Signals, First Field Battery, Fiji Artillery Regiment, First Bearer Company, Fiji Medical Corps were all dependent on New Zealand personnel. When the Fijian Military grew to brigade group size, it became necessary to request assistance from New Zealand. Altogether, 58 additional officers and 214 non-commissioned officers were required. These men were drawn mainly from New Zealanders who had already served in Fiji with the 3NZ Division.³⁴ Officers from the Division, such as Brigadier W.H. Cunningham, Brigadier J.G. Wales and Captain C.W. Tripp, had immense influence in the development of the FDF by virtue of their leadership and administrative talents. In many ways the FDF is a reflection of the New Zealand Army.

The New Zealand connection continued in the aftermath of World War II: 'some 60 officers and 200 other ranks, nearly all specialists, remained with the Fiji Defence Force, for which New Zealand also provided a Commander, until Fiji became independent in 1970'.³⁵ Fijian personnel have trained with New Zealanders. The strong links between the New Zealand Army and the Fijian military survive despite several military coups. A portrait of William Cunningham hangs in the Officers Mess in Queen Elizabeth Barracks, Suva.³⁶

Despite American dominance in the Pacific War the importance of Australia to New Zealand defence remained manifest. Attempts at an Anzac defence in 1941 came to nothing, but there had earlier been a division of defence responsibilities in 1939 of Fiji to New Zealand and Papua New Guinea to Australia.³⁷ The interest in common strategic defence was recognised in the Canberra Pact. Although there had been considerable Australian resentment at New Zealand's refusal to bring its Division back from the Middle East, the Australians supplied New Zealand with much of the British-designed weapons and munitions which equipped 3NZ Division. The continued

³³ 'First Commando Fijian Guerrillas was organised, trained and led in action by forty four New Zealanders. The total strength of the Commando was approximately two hundred men....' Colin Larsen *Pacific Commandos – New Zealanders and Fijians in Action*, Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1946, p.9. Also Howlett, p.19.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.177.

³⁵ Frank Rennie, *Regular Soldier, A Life in the New Zealand Army*, Auckland: Endeavour Press, 1986, p.263.

³⁶ Col. Jonisario Maru F.D.F., Email, 7 July 2007, Author's Collection.

³⁷ Pacific Defence Conference 1939.

existence of 3NZ Division had much to do with the likely Australian reaction to its disbandment. New Zealand contemplated its two-brigade Division being deployed for the invasion of Japan alongside Australian forces as part of a Commonwealth Corps.

The defence links between the New Zealand Army and the Australian Army in World War II had been tenuous and amounted to training of New Zealanders in 'Independent Companies' for commando forces, and special operations. Lessons from Australian jungle fighting were disseminated to 3NZ Division but both armies had to learn independent lessons from the Americans on amphibious operations because of the MacArthur/Nimitz division. Post-war defence links with Australia would be propelled by the demands of 'forward defence'.

Because of 3NZ Division's deployment into the South Pacific the defence relationship had subtly changed with the British. The Lethbridge Mission showed a British willingness to learn from Australasian jungle fighting. The British had suffered disasters in Burma in 1942-43 and eagerly sought to recruit New Zealand officers to reform 14th Army³⁸. The experience of 3NZ Division in jungle warfare would earn British respect which would continue with Commonwealth operations in Malaysia in the post-war world. Furthermore, during the war New Zealand had been obliged to take over defence responsibilities for British possessions within the New Zealand Naval Station. New Zealand had to take responsibility for local defence and for islands like Fanning.

For the Americans the deployment of 3NZ Division was a milestone. Prior to December 1941 New Zealand had not been envisaged as a defence partner except as an integral part of the British-American alliance. The exigencies of the Japanese strike south changed that. New Zealand became not only a base of operations but also a partner, albeit on a small scale and with complete American strategic dominance. 3NZ Division earned recognition from the Americans as being one of the best Allied units in the South Pacific to the extent that American personnel were placed under the direct command of a New Zealand Major-General. 3NZ Division's successful operations earned kudos from Wilkinson, Halsey and Nimitz. The fact that the New Zealanders

³⁸ Archives NZ, EA 87/3/10 Part 1, NZ Officers for the Indian Army.

were adaptable and willing to get along with American commanders would engender a respect for New Zealand forces fighting abilities which would continue in Korea and Vietnam.

The placing of New Zealand forces under American command was precedent setting. For the first time New Zealand land forces came under non British command, and moreover the operations were successful and casualties small. The movement away from Commonwealth defence to reliance on American protection took decades, but it is arguable that 3NZ Division's deployment was an important milestone.

The legacy of 3NZ Division in the post war New Zealand Army is not straightforward. By 1950 the Army had largely reverted to its pre-war form, with no regular units but a cadre of officers and NCOs whose role was to form the backbone of a 'Third New Zealand Expeditionary Force', developed from mobilised citizen soldiers.³⁹ The focus of this Expeditionary Force was to be a deployment to the Middle East. However, the Malayan Emergency required Commonwealth troops and a Fijian battalion was raised with Fijian veterans of the Pacific War providing the company leadership.⁴⁰ New Zealand soldiers and NCOs were sent to 1 Fijian Infantry Regiment, but 'it was a case of learning on the job'.⁴¹ The Commander, Major Ron Tinker, a New Zealander was a veteran of the Long Range Desert Group, and the Fijian soldiers were mainly recruits. Similarly a New Zealand SAS Squadron was created from scratch led by Major Frank Rennie, a veteran of 3NZ Division.⁴² That Squadron was replaced in 1957 by 1st Battalion, New Zealand Regiment, the first regular unit in the New Zealand Army.⁴³ Veterans of 2NZ Division such as Major General Stephen Weir predominated in the New Zealand Army.

Experience in Malaya 1952-60 provided a basis of jungle warfare expertise for a new generation of New Zealand soldiers. The training was provided by the British and was based on their experience in Burma in WWII. It was this experience that the Army would build on for later operations in Vietnam. Because 3NZ Division was made up of

³⁹ Christopher Pugsley, *From Emergency to Confrontation*: Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2003, p.22.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.24.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p.25.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p.92.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.124.

citizen soldiers who largely returned to their civilian lives at the end of the war, the New Zealand Army lost the expertise that had been so hard won except for individuals like Frank Rennie who continued as career soldiers. Faced with the jungles of South East Asia a new generation the New Zealand Army had to relearn its skills.

The experience that 3NZ Division gained on amphibious assaults similarly faded⁴⁴. It has only been very recently that involvement in amphibious warfare has revived with the purchase of the HMNZS Charles Upham, a roll on – roll off vessel, and then HMNZS Canterbury. The state of the art in amphibious operations has changed hugely since 1944 with the advent of helicopters and specialised amphibious vehicles.⁴⁵

The New Zealand Army Service Corps produced a 'Report on N.Z.A.S.C. Operations with 3NZ Division in South Pacific, which set out lessons learned and made recommendations. The Report spanned the size of War Establishments through to Field Bakeries and liaison with American units. However the report was very specific to the South Pacific.⁴⁶ A similar type of report was produced by Brigadier Dove.⁴⁷ Barrowclough produced a report detailing the operations of 3NZ Division, which went to Peter Fraser in late 1944. The report was explanatory rather than analytical.⁴⁸ The war was still raging and there was not the luxury of retrospection and analysis of what went wrong or what went right in the South Pacific.

Yet if the experiences of 3NZ Division did not crystallise into doctrine, and the lessons learned, like those on desert and mountain warfare of 2NZ Division, tended to fade away, nonetheless those experiences became part of the fabric of the Army's history. A 'Vella Lavella Barracks' was opened by Major General McKinnon at Waioru on 30 October 1990. The Intelligence Corps in 2004 commemorated Sgt Cowan's behind-the-lines exploits by dedicating a room to him at Waioru. A Valentine Mk V, 'Tamitea' of

⁴⁴ Combined operations were carried out by the New Zealand Military in the 1950s but then lapsed. Archives NZ, N1 16/3/1 Part 3.

⁴⁵ Colonel M.H.H. Evans, Amphibious Operations – The Projection of Sea Power Ashore, London: Brassey's, 1990.

⁴⁶ Lt. Col C.A. Blazly, CRASC, 3NZ Division May 1945, unpublished, Authors Collection.

⁴⁷ Archives NZ AD12, 28/15/2.

⁴⁸ Archives NZ EA 28, 28/15/4 Report on Ops 3 Division. Barrowclough to Fraser.

3NZ Division Tank Squadron stands guard at the Queen Elizabeth II Army Museum.⁴⁹ But it is arguable that for the modern soldier the events of the Pacific War are as obscure as battles on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

Working alongside non-British military personnel was hard for the Army but it adjusted. This experience would stand it in good stead in subsequent deployments with American and UN Peacekeeping Missions. In a carryover from both Freyberg's and Barrowclough's Charters every senior New Zealand military commander in the postwar period that has had troops under his command deployed operationally overseas, has possessed a 'Command Directive'⁵⁰.

Perhaps because of the dominance of 2NZ Division and the fact that some personnel from 3NZ Division served in Italy, there was not the friction between those who served in the Mediterranean and those who served the Pacific, in the post war New Zealand Army. In contrast there were clashes in the post-war RNZAF between those who had served in the European air war and those who had served in the Pacific.⁵¹ The RNZAF contribution in the Pacific had been numerically greater, the challenges had been very different, and there was a sense that the Pacific was the harder theatre.

The significance of 3NZ Division lies in what it achieved in World War II. After it was disbanded in 1944 the legacies of 3NZ Division proved to be ephemeral and localised. Partly this was because the Division was largely composed of citizen soldiers who rapidly merged back into the civilian society. Barrowclough is the prime example, rapidly moving from being a Major General back to being a lawyer. The Division itself ceased to be on the order of battle of the New Zealand Army and its soldiers were scattered by demobilisation or absorbed into 2NZ Division. A similar phenomenon

⁴⁹ Army News, Issue 304, 2 March 2004 – Project Tamitea is the Army's plan to house its collection of military vehicles.

⁵⁰ Ministry of Defence File D24/3/8. For example, the Directive to Commander New Zealand Army Force Far East regarding New Zealand Forces in South Vietnam, 1967, para 22 provides a Right of Appeal in the event that his force was given a task which 'adversely affects the national interest of New Zealand', or which adversely affects the well being of New Zealand services personnel...'. The Right of Appeal ultimately was to NZ Army HQ. Author's Collection.

⁵¹ Joan Clouston describes how her husband who served with the RNZAF in Europe was surprised on his return to New Zealand at the depth of feeling by RNZAF commanders who had fought in the Pacific towards their counterparts who had fought in Europe and who were perceived as having a more 'comfortable' war. Interview Joan Clouston, 2007.

occurred with 2NZ Division, and for that matter most of the military units of the Western democracies. Demobilisation of military forces at the end of World War II resulted in a huge loss of corporate knowledge.⁵²

The casualties of 3NZ Division had been slight and therefore there were no scars on the national psyche which demanded remembrance such as had occurred at Gallipoli and on the Western Front in World War One. Nor, could it be argued, could the veterans of 3NZ Division have demanded recognition of their efforts as their due, because of the limited public awareness of what they had undertaken and their privations. After all, weren't they 'the coconut bombers', the boys who had experienced an easy war in the islands compared to the Desert War and the slog up the spine of Italy?

Nor did the orientation of New Zealand's foreign policy help. Although the interaction of 3NZ Division with American forces in the Pacific is significant in hindsight, this was not apparent in the late 1940s and 1950s. Britain and its Commonwealth were triumphant in World War II and there was an expectation that there would be a return to business as usual, and that Britain would return to its role as the primary guarantor of Australasia's freedoms. Certainly steps, such as the ANZUS Pact 1951, were taken to accommodate the realities of the new American dominance in the Pacific but generally speaking New Zealand aligned its foreign policy along British lines as can be seen from its stance on the Suez Crisis of 1956.⁵³ The full extent to which British power had declined became evident after a succession of White Papers on defence and cuts in military spending, when the British began a total withdrawal from 'East of Suez' in 1967. Britain's entry into the European Economic Community also emphasised that it was dismantling its Empire and that the Australasians had to look to the United States as their primary protector.

The units of 3NZ Division were returned on a piecemeal basis to New Zealand because

⁵² The fate of Task Force Smith, a United States Army unit that broke on contact with North Korean tanks in 1950 illustrates the point. This was a bare five years from the United States Army's triumphal role in the destruction of the Axis powers. Basic lessons had to be relearned.

⁵³ Malcolm Templeton, Ties of Blood & Empire – New Zealand's Involvement in Middle East Defence and the Suez Crisis 1947-57; Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1994, p.57 'you may be assured that New Zealand will as always fully support any steps which the United Kingdom will feel obliged to take to ensure that vital British rights are fully protected'. Holland to Eden July 1956.

of the need for operational security⁵⁴ and shipping shortages. By the time of the return of the 3NZ Division soldiers to New Zealand in late 1944 the war was still raging in Europe and the Pacific. There were no victory parades and units were simply broken up and the soldiers demobilised or sent as reinforcements to the Mediterranean. The lack of recognition of what 3NZ Division had achieved was to persist in the post war years.

For many veterans of 3NZ Division who did not go on to join 2NZ Division in Italy their service in the Pacific seemed to be unappreciated by not only the New Zealand public but also other veterans. A veteran of 3NZ Division who saw combat on the Treasury Islands described how he found Anzac Days particularly hard because of the disdain shown by 2NZ Division veterans to the 'Coconut Bombers' of 3NZ Division. On one occasion a 2NZ Division veteran had flicked his Pacific Star with his finger and had disdainfully inquired 'what did you do to earn this?'⁵⁵ For some veterans their service in the Pacific was source of shame. Another veteran of 3NZ Division who had been a 'Base Wallah' on New Caledonia and later Guadalcanal felt that he could not wear his medals on Anzac Days or even stand alongside his friends because he had not earned his medals and the conditions of those in the Mediterranean had been far worse. Ironically, he had been downgraded on his return to New Zealand because of tropical ear infection which would remain with him for the rest of his life and had missed out on deployment to Italy.⁵⁶ Some saw significance and an intentional slight in the fact that 2NZ Division veterans led the parade in Wellington to celebrate the 60th anniversary of VJ Day. A number of veterans made the point to me that a soldier goes where he is sent and they had no choice where they were deployed.

Attempts were made by Barrowclough to publicise the Divisions achievements by issuing unofficial histories. However, these were distributed to the veterans⁵⁷ and although in Public Libraries did not receive wide dissemination. The issue of The Pacific, the official history, did little to solve the problem. The history spanned a wide area ranging from garrisons to Fijian Commandos and RNZAF and RNZN activity.

⁵⁴ Even as late as January 1945 U862 was off New Zealand's coast. David Stevens U-Boat Far From Home, St Leonards, NSW: Allen Pty Ltd, 1997, pp.174-183.

⁵⁵ Interview Allan Rogers 20 September 2006. Author's Collection.

⁵⁶ Les Bee Interview, 28 December 2006.

⁵⁷ Each member of 3NZ Division was intended to receive a copy of the history of their particular unit rather than all of the units comprising 3NZ Division.

The plethora of official Battalion histories and other histories of 2NZ Division far outweighed in quantity the pages of official histories devoted to the Pacific War. There are few published personal accounts of New Zealanders in 3NZ Division.⁵⁸ This contrasts with the memoirs issued by veterans of 2NZ Division.⁵⁹

For years there has been little public interest, or even awareness of what was achieved in the South Pacific by 3NZ Division. This is despite the fact that for many wartime New Zealand families they had members 'in the islands'. As the World War II generation passes the veil of obscurity descends ever more tightly. However, the achievements of 3NZ Division were significant and the sacrifices its soldiers made were substantial. They deserve to be rescued from that obscurity.

⁵⁸ I am aware only of Frank Rennie's Regular Soldier, the book of cartoons by Frank Cooze and the poetry of William Scott.

⁵⁹ These ranged from John Mulgan's, Report on Experience through to John Henderson's Gunner Inglorious, and from the literary to the popular.

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSIONS

In the six decades since 3NZ Division was deployed into the South Pacific very little work has been undertaken on the reasons why the force was despatched, the problems it faced, its interactions with the dominant American partner, its leadership, its combat performance, and the reasons for its ultimate disbandment. 3NZ Division has been largely relegated to obscurity in comparison with 2NZ Division. This is in large measure due to the 'Germany First' strategy followed by Wellington which saw its best manpower despatched to Europe. The more glamorous 2NZ Division and its part in significant European campaigns attracted more publicity than its Cinderella sister division, which spent most of its time in garrison duty.

The reasons why New Zealand soldiers were sent to Fiji from 1940 onwards and why New Zealand assumed defence responsibility for Fiji are clear. In 1939 the British faced simultaneous threats in Europe and the Far East. They gambled on Japan remaining quiescent and shifted most of their resources to Europe and the Mediterranean whilst maintaining the facade of security via the Singapore Base. New Zealand accordingly sent 2NZ Division to Britain and Egypt to bolster Commonwealth defence, recognising that if Britain fell, the Commonwealth would collapse and New Zealand's position would be invidious. Nonetheless, there remained the local threat that the Japanese might seize Fiji preparatory to an invasion of Australasia, as a naval base to interdict shipping or as an air base for bombing New Zealand. The gradual deployment of New Zealand soldiers to Fiji from 1940 onwards was an act of strategic juggling between local and Commonwealth defence, in which the latter enjoyed priority. The units deployed to Fiji were intended to remain there only a short time to receive training and then to proceed to the 'real war' in Europe. They were initially ill-trained, ill-equipped and led by officers who were often unfit. New Zealand took a strategic gamble by deploying such limited forces. Even after Pearl Harbor, the diversion of reinforcements from 2NZ Division to Fiji was considered insufficient by both the American and New Zealand military to defend the islands adequately. It is likely that had the Japanese struck at Fiji the New Zealanders would have suffered the same fate as other Allied garrisons in the Pacific. The American decision in 1941 to use airpower to defend the Philippines also made Fiji vital strategically as a staging point,

while the consequent development of airfields there increased the threat to New Zealand if the Japanese were to seize them.

3NZ Division was returned to New Zealand at American insistence. The desire to use New Zealand troops varied at different levels of the American military and political system and there was chronic miscommunication between Washington and Wellington. It is likely that the reconstituted 3NZ Division would never have left New Zealand shores but for the effects of the Guadalcanal Campaign, which sucked in tremendous numbers of American troops and created the need for vital points to be garrisoned. The New Zealanders were too ill-trained and ill-equipped to have taken part in the fight for Guadalcanal. What they were initially requested to do was to garrison Norfolk Island and Tonga and to relieve American troops on New Caledonia. The uncertainty as to the Division's real purpose resulted in it being chronically under-strength by at least a brigade and also in it being encumbered by the heavy guns thought necessary for garrison duty.

Unlike its sister division, 3NZ Division had to be equipped by Wellington, albeit from British, Australian and New Zealand supplies. Weapons and equipment were of largely British model and this made 3NZ Division an American Quartermaster's nightmare because of incompatibility with American stocks. Even so 3NZ Division was hugely reliant on American logistics for supplies of food, oil and other essentials.

3NZ Division was deployed overseas when there was still some potential Japanese threat to New Zealand, despite Midway Island (June 1942) and Guadalcanal (August 1942 to January 1943). Fraser considered that if too much emphasis was placed on 'Germany First' the Japanese might regroup and take advantage of offensive opportunities. 3NZ Division was deployed to New Caledonia in November 1942 whilst the Guadalcanal battles were at their height. Wellington gambled that there were sufficient troops and tanks left in New Zealand if the Japanese resumed offensive operations. It did so for a number of political reasons. The refusal of Wellington to follow the Australian example and insist on its troops being returned home from the Mediterranean incensed Curtin, and the deployment of 3NZ Division was one way of muting such criticism. There was also a perceived need to show the British flag in the South Pacific, even if it was only through a New Zealand proxy. There was a real

concern that a dominant United States would annex territories conquered by its troops. There was also a belief that New Zealand had to do its bit in the war against Japan to earn its place at the peace table.¹

As commander of 3NZ Division, Major General Barrowclough pressed unsuccessfully for more resources to be allocated to it. Demands to relieve long-serving soldiers of 2NZ Division created the unfortunate situation of the 'furlough men', soldiers from 2NZ Division who were granted leave in New Zealand but of whom the majority refused to return to the Middle East. This effectively hamstrung 3NZ Division. Without sufficient troops it assumed the form of a weak two-brigade division unable to relieve an equivalent American division in the front line. More positively, the units of heavy artillery were disbanded and their personnel absorbed into the Division.

Barrowclough had been an enthusiastic advocate of training in the Middle East and he replicated his efforts on a larger scale in the Pacific. He did not have the full opportunity to display his command skills in the Pacific because of the low level of operations undertaken by the units of the Division. However, he did administer the Division effectively, no mean feat considering its personnel were spread from New Caledonia to the Green Islands. He played a key role in the reorganisation of the Division when 15 Brigade was disbanded. Barrowclough also maintained an excellent relationship with his American counterparts and it is likely that the American willingness to use New Zealand troops stemmed from their confidence in him.

The relationship between the New Zealanders and their American allies ranged from respect and friendship through to envy and acute dislike. Generally, however, they got along well, particularly in the front-line units. Friction generally occurred in the rear areas and was often fuelled by alcohol. Theft of American goods and equipment by New Zealand soldiers occurred on a regular basis but not at such a level as to imperil seriously the relationship between the two nationalities. It is arguable that New Zealand soldiers were no more prone to committing thefts than any other units in the South

¹ The Australians had a similar belief. One of their official historians comments that 'it is an illusion to which small nations are prone that the policies of foreign allies, as distinct from those with whom patriotic sentiments are shared, are influenced by such emotions as gratitude for past support'. Gavin Long, *The Final Campaigns*, Canberra: Australian War Memorial, 1963, p.587.

Pacific. There were huge cultural differences between the nationalities and sometimes even commonalities such as language proved divisive. Overall, however, there was a huge reservoir of goodwill among the fighting men and the relationship was generally positive. The Americans, however, were the dominant partner and operations were carried out at American behest and to serve American operational needs. 3NZ Division was hugely reliant on American shipping, air support and logistics in the Solomon Islands. The dividend for the Americans was that they were able to employ New Zealand soldiers in combat operations which may not have been undertaken due to the shortage of American personnel.

3NZ Division did contribute to Allied victory in the Pacific War. Firstly, it garrisoned key strategic points and thereby prevented their easy seizure by the enemy. The task of garrisoning the Fijian Islands was unglamorous and the units involved performed hard physical labour creating infrastructure such as barracks, fortifications, ammunition storage facilities and roads. When the New Zealand forces were repatriated the American troops who took over had the benefit of that hard work. Secondly, because of the acute shortage of Allied soldiers in the South Pacific in 1943, it was able to provide respite for badly battered American units in the New Georgia campaign by mopping up on Vella Lavella. Similarly 3NZ Division provided a brigade for Operation Goodtime and thereby enhanced the chances of success of the invasion of Bougainville. By providing the land force component of Operation Squarepeg, the Division significantly furthered the neutralisation of Rabaul. On a smaller level, troops of the Division aided the war effort with intelligence-gathering activities. Nor should the logistical help provided by the Division soldiers be discounted – moving supplies and equipment may have lacked glamour but logistics were the key to success in the Pacific War.

The combat operations of the Division were risky. It operated under Japanese-dominated skies was exposed to air attack. Both the Vella Lavella and Treasury Islands operations faced possible counter-attack from Japanese forces on neighbouring islands. The operations were complex, involving elements of amphibious operations and jungle warfare, and requiring extensive co-operation from the Americans. The New Zealanders learned lessons, sometimes very painfully, and they adapted accordingly. By the time of its final operation on the Green Islands, the Division had become seasoned and, although chronically under-strength, had become regarded as very

combat capable, as shown by American plans to use it in further more complex operations.

The men of 3NZ Division were sent overseas. Isolated from their families they faced the prospect of wounds, death or capture. The conditions faced by the troops sent to the South Pacific varied, but for most their sojourn was more travail than holiday. The heat, humidity, restricted food choices, deadly flora and fauna and the impressive range of diseases to which they were exposed all ensured that there would be high levels of personal discomfort. After the fighting had passed there was the grinding boredom of garrison duty, often accompanied by a sense of purposelessness. Overall the discipline of the Division was well maintained and compares favourably with 2NZ Division. The troops of 3NZ Division suffered from the misconceptions of the New Zealand public and had to bear the stigma of being called ‘coconut bombers’, an unfair and demeaning sobriquet.

The disbandment of 3NZ Division was as muddled as its creation. In World War II New Zealand attempted to do too much with its limited manpower resources. Unlike Australia, which after 1942 focused its resources on local defence, New Zealand consistently maintained its strongest focus on Commonwealth defence in the Mediterranean. The needs of 2NZ Division were primary and were fulfilled at the expense of 3NZ Division, which received no further replacements or reinforcements after October 1943. Only briefly in the aftermath of the Japanese entry into the war were reinforcements diverted to the Fijian Garrison at the expense of 2NZ Division. Even as efforts were being made to complete the Division on New Caledonia, thought was being given to transferring some of its trained soldiers to the Mediterranean. Reinforcements and replacements for 3NZ Division were instead used for 2NZ Division in the aftermath of the Furlough Scheme. Puttick, as senior military officer and adviser to the Government, consistently held that the needs of 2NZ Division had priority. As the war progressed, greater demands were made on New Zealand to produce food and goods for Britain and for American forces in the Pacific. Manpower had to be juggled to ensure that these needs were met. Although 3NZ Division had its advocates, considerable political pressure was applied by the British to retain 2NZ Division in Europe. As became apparent in late 1943, New Zealand could not sustain two divisions. The stark choice had to be made as to which one to disband. The decision

was difficult and for some time Fraser procrastinated, seeking the opinion of the British. He was advised that the preference was for New Zealand to leave 2NZ Division in place and to withdraw 3NZ Division temporarily but keep its cadres intact with a view to expansion in 1945. Barrowclough stubbornly resisted the dismemberment of his Division, but in vain and the Americans administered the coup de grace by insisting that the remnants of the Division vacate their base on New Caledonia. The cooling of relations due to the Canberra Pact undoubtedly played a role in this. Moreover, by 1944 New Zealand had other less costly options in the Pacific in the form of the RNZAF, which had grown to 17 squadrons (by combing 3NZ Division for recruits, among other means) and also units of the Royal New Zealand Navy. Once the Division had returned to New Zealand, it became progressively easier to decide to disband it, always with the thought that at some later point New Zealand soldiers would return from Europe to fight against Japan.

Had 3NZ Division been involved in the Guadalcanal Campaign, the New Georgia Campaign or a bloody assault on Rabaul, it is likely that the casualties would have ensured the Division a prominent page in New Zealand's military history. Its comparative obscurity was, however, ensured by the small scale of its operations, their limited number and the relatively small casualties involved. Lack of publicity further contributed to its undervaluation. Ironically, the success of the play and film, South Pacific, served to cement in the popular imagination that conditions in the South Pacific were idyllic. Faced with public misconceptions, the veterans were not inclined to dispute this view. Adding to this was often a sense of inferiority that the men in Europe had fought the 'real' war.

In theory, the Americans subscribed to the 'Germany First' strategy. Nonetheless, the first American offensive operation was the seizure of Guadalcanal and American commanders such as King, Nimitz and Halsey were committed to offensive operations in the Pacific. 3NZ Division, even in its understrength, logistically inconvenient mode, was a resource that could not be ignored. The troops were already in the South Pacific and did not have to be transported there when merchant shipping was at a premium.

The Americans used 3NZ Division in the South Pacific because it suited them to. The tasks assigned to 3NZ Division had elements of risk and were able to be undertaken at

Brigade level. As the New Zealanders proved themselves to be reliable the Americans began to assign them significant tasks such as the taking of the Green Islands. Even in late 1943, there was a shortage of combat troops in the South Pacific, and this scarcity more than compensated for the logistically difficult New Zealanders. 3NZ Division was able to adapt to American practices and competently carried out the tasks assigned to it. By so doing the soldiers fulfilled Fraser's requirement that New Zealand be represented in the fighting and earned New Zealand a place on the deck of the USS Missouri in August 1945.

APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY

A

AA - Anti-Aircraft

AA & QMG - Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster General, i.e., Senior Administrative Military Officer (also “A & Q”).

AAA - Anti-Aircraft Artillery

ABC - A series of discussions held between British and American military representatives prior to American entry into World War II on the side of the Allies. Because of American neutrality the discussions were held in secret.

ABDA - Acronym for “American British Dutch and Australian” - a command arrangement entered into after the Japanese attack on 7/8 December 1941 designed to co-ordinate Allied defence against Japanese aggression in South East Asia. British General Archibald Wavell was nominally in command of land forces and Dutch Admiral Doorman was nominally in command of naval forces. Because of differences in language, training, military resources, radio frequencies, weapon types, logistics and national objectives the arrangement collapsed after the twin disasters of the Fall of Singapore and the battle of the Java Sea.

Acorn - United States Navy code name for a CB unit tasked with constructing, operating and maintaining advanced plane and sea plane bases.

ADC - Aide de Camp - A military assistant to an officer of high rank.

Adjt - Adjutant

Adm - Admiral

ADMS - Assistant Director Medical Services.

ADOS - Assistant Director of Ordnance Services (see Ordnance & RNZASC).

ADS - Advanced Dressing Station (i.e., A medical facility located further back from Regimental Aid Posts).

Adv - Advance

Adv Base - Advance Base

AEF - American Expeditionary Force (World War I)

AFV - Armoured Fighting Vehicle.

AGC - USN acronym - Combined Operations Communications HQ Ship. Most often used as flagships of an amphibious force.

AHQ - Army Headquarters (Wellington, NZ)

A.I.F. - Australian Imperial Force - Australian Army troops who had volunteered to serve outside the borders of Australia and who were deployed overseas. These troops could be considered to be the best trained and equipped of Australian's troops. These troops were initially deployed in the Middle East. In contrast, Australian Militia troops could not be committed for use outside the borders of Australia (which included New Guinea).

Air S.C.O. - Air Support Control Officer - a British Commonwealth concept - an officer tasked with liaison between air and ground forces. Generally a former pilot attached to a ground unit.

AK - United States Navy acronym - Cargo Ship

AKA - United States Navy acronym - Auxiliary Cargo Transport, Attack.

Alamo - US Code name for US Sixth Army Task Force operating under MacArthur's direction in SW Pacific.

Alamo Scouts - Sixth US Army Special Reconnaissance Unit.

ALP - Air Liaison Parties. Dedicated air-ground support units. In July 1943 1st Marine Air Wing trained ALP's to support USMC and 8 Bde in Operation Goodtime.

AM - United States Navy Acronym - Minesweeper

Amb - Ambulance

AMCU - Anti-Malarial Control Unit

Americal Division - US Army Division formed on New Caledonia, in January 1942 out of two National Guard Regiments and a regiment put together.

AMF - Australian Military Force - An under-trained, ill-equipped militia that could not be sent outside the borders of Australia.

Amphibious Operation - an attack launched from the sea by naval and landing forces with the aim of landing on a hostile shore.

Amtracs - USMC term for amphibious tractors or vehicles designed to carry troops or personnel from ships to inshore areas. See also LVTS.

ANGAU - Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit. An organisation controlled by the Australian Military for the purpose of maximising New Guinea's war effort.

ANZAC - Acronym for "Australia and New Zealand Army Corps" from WWI, but also used in reference in WWII to refer to the Australia-New Zealand defence area. During World War II Australia and New Zealand, despite being part of the British Empire, did not have a unified command organisation.

AP - Armoured Piercing Ammunition; also Ammunition Point - a place where ammunition is collected for operations; also US Navy acronym for a Transport Ship.

APA - United States Navy acronym - Auxiliary Ship Cargo Attack - Large US transports used to transport troops including troops of 3NZ Division (see also “The Unholy Four”).

APC - USN acronym - Coastal transport ship.

APD - United States Navy acronym for “Army Personnel Destroyer”. A “four stacker” obsolete American destroyer modified by the removal of funnels to provide accommodation area for troops. Originally designed to provide fast transport for USMC raiding parties in line with the raiding philosophy developed by the USMC in the interwar years. APD’s were used in WWII for the transport of elements of NZ 8 Brigade and NZ 14 Brigade to Japanese held areas in the Solomons.

APM - Assistant Provost Marshall

Apptd - Appointed

AQ - Army Quartermaster.

AR - All Ranks

Argus - US Codeword for Radar Units involved in fighter control, e.g., Argus Unit Seven deployed on Green Island in 1944. This involved New Zealand radar sets and operators as well as specialist US personnel. The USN purpose for Argus Units was “to provide during the development stage of a United States Naval Base a comprehensive air warning, surface warning and fighter direction organisation which will co-ordinate all radar operations under the area commander.” Typically, an Argus Unit was made up of 20 officers and 178 men (source: ONS Combat Narrative, Solomon Islands Campaign).

Arcadia - Allied code name for a Conference held in Washington DC 22 Dec. 1941-14 Jan. 1942. The meeting between Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt confirmed “The Germany First” policy. At this stage of the war the British tended to dominate their American counterparts.

Arisaka - Japanese .25 calibre rifle

Armd - Armoured

Army - Military Unit composed of several Corps.

ASC - Army Service Corps

A/T - Anti Tank

Atk By - Anti-Tank Battery

Attd - Attached

Avenger TBF - US single engined aircraft made by Grumman used primarily for torpedo and bombing operations. Used by USN and RNZAF.

AWOL - Absent Without Leave

AWM - Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

B

B-Force - The designation given to New Zealand soldiers deployed to Fiji in 1940. This unit was later designated 8 Brigade Group and became the core of what would become 3 NZ Division.

B-17 - Flying Fortress - USAAF strategic heavy bomber produced by Boeing. A state of the art weapon in the period prior to American entry into World War II. Proponents of air power saw this as a means of coastal defence for the United States and a means of defending the Philippines from Japanese attack. Although tough, the bulk of B17s in the Philippines and Hawaii were destroyed in the initial Japanese aerial onslaught in December 1941 and the promise of early air power exponents remained unfulfilled. Used extensively in E.T.O.

B-24 Liberator - USAAF strategic heavy bomber produced by Consolidated. One of the most successful American bombers of WWII because of its long range and good payload.

B-25 Mitchell - USAAF Twin engine medium bomber produced by North American - used extensively for bombing. A variant was used for strafing to good effect against naval vessels.

B-29 Superfortress - USAAF heavy bomber produced by Boeing. Built with the aim of bombing Japanese cities. Used from bases in China and the Marianas. Used for the delivery of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Backhandler - Allied code name for the United States amphibious invasion of the western part of New Britain on 15 December 1943 in conjunction with a similar invasion of Cape Gloucester on the other end of the island. Part of Operation Cartwheel.

BAR - Browning Automatic Rifle (US Machine Gun)

Barbarossa - German code name for the attack on Soviet Russia on 22 June 1941. This attack allied the Russians with the British Empire and removed the immediate threat of Soviet attack on Japanese territory. The Germans did not divulge their plans to attack Russia to the Japanese and the Japanese in their turn did not divulge their plans for their strike south to the Germans.

Barrowclough's Charter - The instructions given by the NZ Government to Major General H.E. Barrowclough in relation to the committal of New Zealand forces to combat. Barrowclough, like Freyberg, had the power to decline to commit New Zealand forces to high risk military operations. A certificate was required from

Barrowclough to the New Zealand Government confirming that the risks were reasonable before 3NZ Division was to be committed to combat.

Bazooka - Hand held anti tank rocket launcher.

BB - Battleship

BC - Battle Casualty

Bde - Brigade. A unit of roughly 7-8,000 troops of various types usually made up of 3 Infantry Battalions or 3 Tank Battalions.

Beachhead - A designated area on a hostile shore which is the objective of an amphibious operation. When seized it allows the attacker to land troops and equipment with the aim of further operations inland.

Beachmaster - An officer (generally naval) tasked with controlling the beaching of landing craft and amphibious vehicles on a beach.

Beach Red - A particular area of the beachhead. It was common for the beach areas to be given a colour designation for planning purposes, e.g., Beach Red, Beach Green, Beach Yellow, etc.

Beaches - Orange One & Orange Two - Landing beaches on Mono Island located between the mouth of the Saveke River and Falamai Point. Purple One, Purple Two & Purple Three - landing beaches on the north of Stirling Island. Emerald One, landing beach at Soanatalu on the northern side of Mono Island.

BEF - British Expeditionary Force.

Betty - Allied code name for Mitsubishi G4M Medium Bomber.

BGS - Brigadier, General Staff (Chief Staff Officer at Corps or Army level).

Binary division - 2 brigade division c.f.. the usual 3 brigades.

Blissful - Allied code name for a diversionary landing by 2 Parachute Bn, USMC on Choiseul Island designed to divert Japanese attention away from the main US landing at Empress Augusta Bay, Bougainville on 1 November 1943.

BLO - Bombardment Liaison Officer

Blower - Radio Telephone

Blue - Colour used in US planning to designate US forces.

BM - Brigade Major (Chief Staff Officer at Brigade level).

Bn/Btn/Batt - Battalion - a unit of roughly 700-900 troops predominantly infantry commanded by a lieutenant colonel. Contains 3-4 rifle companies and a company of supporting weapons, or three squadrons of tanks plus HQ.

Boat Pool - Boats used for assault landing from Mother Ships.

BOD - Base Ordnance Depot - supply base.

Bofors - A 40 mm multi-barrelled light AA Gun of Swedish design.

Bogey - Unidentified aircraft.

BOW - Base Ordnance Workshop

BPF - British Pacific Fleet. The Royal Navy fleet commanded by Admiral Fraser in 1944 which was used in the Indian Ocean and later in the Pacific attached as a Task Force with the USN. Although a force which would have been considered very powerful in 1941 terms it had relatively speaking become a mere component part of the American effort in 1944-45.

BRA - Brigadier Royal Artillery

BRD - Base Reception Depot

Bren Gun - A light machine gun used by Commonwealth forces.

Bren Gun Carrier - A light open-topped tracked vehicle designed to carry a Bren Gun but also used for reconnaissance and general transport and haulage work.

Brigade Group - A very flexible formation. Used extensively in the Desert War. During the invasion of Normandy on 6 June 1944 Brigade Groups were used extensively in the initial phases on the British and Canadian beaches.

Bty - Battery - a tactical and administrative unit of artillery roughly corresponding to a company in other branches of the army.

Butai - Japanese Unit or detachment.

C

CA - Heavy Cruiser, also Coastal Artillery

Cactus - Allied code name for Guadalcanal.

Call Sign - Code identification of a sender or receiver of a W/T or R/T message.

Canberra Pact - Defence Treaty signed between NZ & Australia in 1944 recognising common defence interests.

Cannibal - British code name for the First Arakan Offensive in Burma in 1943. This failed disastrously and exposed weaknesses in Anglo-Indian Army doctrine, training and leadership.

CAP - Combat Air Patrol - a protective aerial umbrella usually provided over a specified area for vessel by fighter aircraft.

Capt - Captain

Carrier - Bren Gun Carrier

Cartwheel - The Allied code name for the two-pronged drive up the coast of New Guinea (by MacArthur's forces) and the Solomon Islands (by Nimitz's forces) designed to isolate and neutralise the main Japanese base in the South Pacific at Rabaul. operations began on 31 June 1943 and were completed by 1 March 1944 leaving the 98,000 garrison bypassed and ineffective.

CAS - Chief of the Air Staff (NZ). Also Close Air Support; a term used to describe air power dedicated to the needs of army units.

Cascade - An Allied Deception Scheme aimed at confusing Axis Intelligence Services as to the New Zealand Forces Order of Battle by deliberately misnumbering units. The units in Fiji in 1942 took part in this operation.

Casualty Clearing Station - First Aid post.

Catalina - PBY5A US twin engined flying boat manufactured by Consolidated - Extensively used by US in patrol, air-sea rescue and anti-submarine work. Also referred to affectionately as "Dumbo" after Walt Disney's flying elephant.

CATS - Combat Air Transport Service. A USMC air transport facility in the Pacific. The unit flew mainly administrative missions but on occasions was involved in evacuating wounded and flying in ammo. The unit that serviced the South Pacific was designated South Pacific Combat Air Transport Service (SCAT). Barrowclough used this facility.

CB - Construction Battalion. Also "Seabee", a USN term for Naval Construction units which performed prodigious feats of engineering, particularly airfield and base construction. These units were integrated into 3 NZ Division operations. Alternatively, Confined to Barracks.

CCS - Anglo-American Combined Chiefs of Staff, also Casualty Cleaning Station - a medical unit sited between a Medical Dressing Station and a Field Hospital.

CCU - Civil Construction Unit - the civilian organisation tasked with the construction and expansion of Fijian airfields in 1941.

Cdo - Commando - implies that a soldier has specialist skills in raiding warfare.

Cdr - Commander.

CE - Chief Engineer

CFG - Commandos, Fijian Guerillas. A term used to refer to Fijian Army Units established initially for resistance to Japanese invasion of Fiji and later for behind Japanese lines operations in the Solomons.

CG - Commanding General.

CGS - Chief of the General Staff.

CID - Committee of Imperial Defence (British)

C.I.G.S. - Chief of the Imperial General Staff. A United Kingdom designation signifying a position of powerful influence within the British defence establishment. General Alanbrooke filled this role for most of the war.

CinC - Commander in Chief

CINCPAC - US Commander in Chief US Pacific Fleet (Admiral Nimitz)

China Incident - A Japanese euphemism for the circumstances which led to their ongoing war with China in 1937. A clash of Chinese and Japanese military units at the Marco Polo Gate in 1937 provided the Imperial Japanese Army with their justification for full scale war with China.

CL - Light Cruiser

Cleanslate - Allied Code name for the invasion of Russell Islands 21 Feb.-20 March 1943. Mounted from Cape Esperance, Guadalcanal, it was a stepping stone operation in the 3 drive to retake the Solomons.

CNO - Chief of Naval Operations.

CNS - Chief of Naval Staff (NZ)

Coastwatcher - Allied personnel deployed on various Pacific Islands with the purpose of covertly observing and reporting on Japanese aerial and naval movement. The Japanese also deployed coastwatchers.

“Coconut Bombers” - A term sometimes used to describe New Zealand soldiers in the Pacific. The term “pineapple pickers” was also used by members of the public.

COD - Council of Defence (NZ). Co-ordinated the activities of ONS.

Colonel’s Revolt - A term used to describe a scandal within the New Zealand Army which became public in 1938 when various high ranking New Zealand officers breached accepted conventions by publicly criticising the NZ Government of Michael Joseph Savage for the depletion in the levels of NZ militia. Four officers were sacked but the inadequacy of NZ defence numbers had been highlighted. H.E. Barrowclough was part of the NZ Defence League, a pressure group set up with the aim of strengthening the NZ military, and which gave support to the concern about depletion

of NZ military strength. He was considered by some to be “the 5th Colonel”. He had resigned his commission some time prior to the Revolt.

COMAIRNORSOLS - Commander Aircraft Northern Solomons (Nov. 43-Jan. 44).

COMAIRSOLS - Commander Aircraft Solomons (TF33). Established on Guadalcanal on 15 February 1943 to control all USMC, USN, USAAF, RNZAF and RAAF units based in the Solomons. The main combat command for ComAirSopac controlling air activities in the Solomons in New Britain areas.

COMAIRSOPAC - Commander Aircraft South Pacific - Commander of All Land Based Aircraft in the South Pacific Command area. Responsible to Admiral Halsey and SOPAC.

ComAirSquarePeg - Commander Aircraft Square Peg (General Harriss, USAAF).

COMAMPHIBFORSOPAC - Commander, Amphibious Force, South Pacific Force.

COMANZAC - Commander, ANZAC Area.

Combat Loading - The loading of transport and cargo ships in such a way that items needed for combat could be easily accessed and unloaded first. Not as efficient as “commercial loading” but essential for the success of an amphibious operation.

Combined Operations - The British expression for amphibious operations. The term correctly emphasises the necessity of inter-service co-operation.

Comd - Command.

COMDESPAC - Commander Destroyers Pacific.

COMDESRON - Commander Destroyer Squadron.

Comdt - Commandant

C.O.M.E. - Chief Ordnance Mechanical Engineer (NZ).

COMGENFMAC - Commanding General First Marine Amphibious Corps.

COMGENSOPAC - Commanding General South Pacific.

COMINCH - Commander in Chief (USN - Admiral Ernest King)

COMMTBRONSOPAC - Commander Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron South Pacific.

Comp Coy - Composite Company

COMSOPAC - Commander South Pacific Area - initially Ghormley and then Halsey.

Condition Red - Air raid warning status - air raid imminent.

Conv Depot - Convalescent Depot.

Corps - Military Unit composed of 2 or more divisions.

COS - Chiefs of Staff. Term used to describe either British or NZ heads of service of the Army, Air Force and Navy.

C.O. - Commanding Officer

Council of Defence (NZ) - Organisation which co-ordinated the activities of ONS.

Coy/Co - Company - Three Platoons of Infantry.

C.P. - Command Post.

Cpl - Corporal

CRA - Commander Royal Artillery (NZ) (of Division)

CRE - Commander Royal Engineers (NZ) (of Division).

CREME - Commander Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers.

Crusader - British Code Name for offensive operations in North Africa November 1941-January 1942 designed to relieve Tobruk.

CT - Combat Team (Regimental)

CTF - Commander, Task Force

CTG - Commander, Task Group

CTU - Commander, Task Unit.

CTF31 - Combined Task Force 31. A USN naval force active in the Solomon Islands commanded by Admiral Theodore Wilkinson. This force provided transport and naval gunfire support to 3 NZ Division.

CV - Fleet Aircraft Carrier

CVE - Escort Aircraft Carrier

CW - Chemical Warfare; also Coastwatcher

D

D-Day - Designated Day on which an operation is to commence. When a plus symbol is used it signifies days after D-Day, when a minus symbol is used it signifies days before D-Day, e.g., D+5 refers to 5 days after the invasion, D-5 refers to 5 days prior to invasion.

DADME - Deputy Assistant Director Mechanical Engineers.

DADOS - Deputy Assistant Director Ordnance Services

DCGS - Deputy Chief of General Staff (NZ)

DCM - Distinguished Conduct Medal

DD - USN acronym - Destroyer

DDMS - Deputy Director Medical Services.

DE - USN acronym - Destroyer Escort.

Defence Medal - NZ Medal awarded to NZ troops in areas considered “non-operational” and which included the garrison areas of Fiji, Tonga, New Hebrides, Guadalcanal and New Caledonia.

Defender - Code name for Lieutenant General Puttick.

DEI - Dutch East Indies.

DEME - Director of Electrical & Mechanical Engineering

Det - Detachment

Dexterity - Allied code name for the seizure of Cape Gloucester, New Britain by amphibious and air borne attacks on 15 December 1943 as part of Operation Cartwheel.

Dipper - Allied code name for the invasion of Bougainville by US 3rd Marine Division 1 November 1943 and consolidation of Northern Solomons 27 Oct, 1943-15 June 1944.

Div - Division - a unit of approximately 12,000-14,000 soldiers.

Div A & QMG - Divisional Adjutant and Quarter Master General.

Div Arty - Divisional Artillery.

Div G - Divisional General Staff Branch

Div HQ - Divisional Headquarters

Div Tps - Divisional Troops.

Div Workshops - Ordnance Unit responsible for the maintenance of weapons and equipment.

DOD - Died of Disease. Alternatively, Department of Defence.

Dog Day - D-Day or Invasion Day. "Dog" refers to "D" in the US phonetic alphabet, e.g., "Plan Dog".

Dovetail - Code name for USMC 4-day amphibious exercise at Koro, Fiji in July 1942 immediately prior to the Guadalcanal landing.

DOW - Died of Wounds, alternatively, Duration of War, alternatively Divisional Ordnance Workshops.

DRLS - Despatch Rider Letter Services.

DSO - Distinguished Service Order

DUKW - Allied 2½ ton 6 x 6 amphibian truck fondly referred to as "The Duck".

E

EATS - Empire Air Training Scheme. A training scheme devised by the British Commonwealth to produce air crew for the air offensive against Germany. Training took place in locations such as Canada. NZ contributed significant numbers of personnel to RAF Bomber Command through this process.

Ech - Echelon a movement of troops in a group. Implies a portion of a unit separated from a parent unit. See also "Flight". In terms of the reinforcements to 2NZ Division, 1st, 2nd and 3rd Echelons refers to the main contingents despatched from NZ.

Elkton III - Code name for US plan for seizing Eastern New Guinea and the Northern and Central Solomons with a view to capturing Rabaul.

Engr- Engineer

ESB - Engineer Special Brigade

Exec - Executive Officer (USN)

Exercises Styx, Scylla & Tonta - Training exercises in River Crossing, beach landings and mountain warfare carried out on New Caledonia in early to mid 1943.

Exercise Cyclops - Code name for amphibious landing practice by 8 Bde and parts of Div HQ in Necal in 1943.

Exercise Efate - Code name for amphibious training practice by 8 Bde at Efate, New Hebrides in 1943.

ETO - European Theatre of Operations.

F

FAD - Field Ammunition Depot

FAP - For all purposes

FCGM - Field General Court Martial

FD - Fighter Director

Fd - Field

Fd Arty - Field Artillery.

Fd Am - Field Ambulance.

Fd Coy - Field Company of Engineers

Fd Hyg Sc - Field Hygiene Section

FDO - Fighter Director Officer.

Fd Regt - Field Regiment of Artillery

Fd Wksps - Field Workshops

FDF - Fijian Defence Force.

FDL - Forward Defended Locality

FEAF - Far Eastern Air Force (US).

Fernleaf - NZ code word for General Bernard Freyberg, GOC 2 NZ Division

Fifth Air Force - The USAAF Air Unit operating in the South West Pacific. In June 1944 it combined with the 13th USAAF to become the Far Eastern Air Force.

Fiji Expeditionary Force - A NZ Army contingent despatched by the Government of William Massey which left Wellington on 5 Feb. 1920 commanded by Major Edward Puttick (later GOC NZ Army) with the aim of crushing a strike by Indian sugar workers. A request had been made for military support by the Governor of Fiji because the strike was perceived as being anti-British. An unopposed landing was made and after one Indian casualty the strike failed. Noteworthy for being the first peace time deployment of NZ soldiers.

FM - Fleet Marine Force, Pacific. Also, Field Manual (US).

FMC - Field Maintenance Centre (NZ).

FMAC - First Marine Amphibious Corps - also "IMAC"

FMF - Pac - Fleet Marine Force, Pacific (US).

Flight - An army expression meaning a movement of troops from one area to another, usually by sea.

FO - Forward observer - an artillery spotter usually deployed close to the front to observe the fall of artillery shells and report suitable targets for artillery.

Forearm - Allied code name for the invasion of Kavieng.

Force Z - Royal Navy Task Force consisting of the HMS Prince of Wales, HMS Repulse and attendant destroyer escorts sent to the Far East prior to the Japanese attack on Malaya. The two capital ships were intended as a deterrent to the Japanese but were sunk by Japanese land based bombers on 10 December 1941 off the coast of Malaya.

FPC - Field Punishment Centre.

Free French - The French who after the fall of France in 1940 opted to align themselves with General de Gaulle rather than with the collaborationist French Government based at Vichy. The French Government in New Caledonia aligned itself with the Free French.

FSD - Forward Supply Depot

FSR - Field Service Regulations - British Army Manual setting out tactical doctrine.

FSS - Field Security Section/Service.

Fwd Base - Forward Base - main supply and maintenance area

G

G1 - Personnel (US Staff)

G2 - Intelligence (US Staff)

G3 - Operations (US Staff)

G4 - Logistics (US Staff)

Galvanic - Allied code name for the invasion of the Gilbert Islands 13 November - 8 December 1943 which included the assault on Tarawa Atoll (Operation Longsuit) 20 November - 4 December 1943.

G Branch - Staff of Division involved with operational matters.

GC & CS - Government Code and Cipher School (Bletchley Park)

Gen - General

GG Fiji - Governor-General of Fiji.

GGNZ - Governor-General of New Zealand

GH - General Hospital

GHQ - General Headquarters

GI - US Army soldier ("Government Issue")

Gnr - Gunner

GOC - General Officer Commanding

Goodtime - Allied code name for the invasion of the Treasury Islands 27 October 1943 - 6 November 1943. A diversionary operation involving the invasion of Mono Island by Northern Force and Stirling Island by Southern Force by 8 Bde 3NZ Division with US Marine, USN and US Army attachments. 1st MAW provided air support as did RNZAF. Initial landing numbered 3,795 due to limitations in sealift capabilities.

GSO - General Staff Officer (made up of various grades, GSO1, GII, etc.).

GSW - Gunshot wound.

H

HCNZ - High Commissioner for New Zealand

HCUK - High Commissioner for the United Kingdom

HE - High Explosive

Hyg - Hygiene

Hvy - Heavy

Higgins Boat - Landing craft for infantry and light vehicles (LCVP)

HMAS - His Majesty's Australian Ship.

HMFS - His Majesty's Fijian Ship.

HMG - Heavy Machine Gun.

HMNZS - His Majesty's New Zealand Ship.

HMS - His Majesty's Ship.

How - Howitzer

Hudson/Ventura - US twin-engined plane made by Lockheed. Frequently used for patrol reconnaissance and anti-submarine work. Used by the US and RNZAF. The Ventura was a development model of the Hudson.

HQ - Headquarters

HQMC - Headquarters Marine Corps.

Hrs - Hours

Hvy - Heavy

I

I/C - In Command

IFF - Identification, Friend or Foe.

IGHQ - Imperial General Headquarters (Japanese)

IJA - Imperial Japanese Army (Kogun)

IJAAF - Imperial Japanese Army Air Force

IJN - Imperial Japanese Navy (Tikoku Kaigun)

IJNAF - Imperial Japanese Naval Air Force (Koku Butai)

Ind Bty - Independent Battery.

Inf - Infantry

Instr- Instructor

Int - Intelligence

J

Jay Force - New Zealand Army Unit involved in the post-war occupation of Japan.

JCS - Joint Chiefs of Staff. A Committee consisting of US Service Heads, Admiral Ernest King, General George C. Marshall and General Hap Arnold tasked with the co-ordination of US military strategy.

Jock Column - A formation used in the Desert War devised by Brigadier Jock Campbell usually consisting of a Field Battery, 2 Infantry Companies and an Anti-Tank Troop.

JPS - Joint Staff Planners.

K

Kaigun - Imperial Japanese Navy

KIA - Killed in Action

Kido Buitai (Japanese) Carrier Striking Force.

KIWI - Code word used to describe the movement of 3 NZ Division to New Caledonia.

Kiwi A, B, C, D - New Zealand Army designation for the optional force ratios for the proposed 3 NZ Division. These ranged from purely garrison troops through to defensive options. Ultimately Kiwi C was chosen.

Kiwi Company - Unit of WAAC with 3 NZ Division

Km - Kilometre

Kogun - Imperial Japanese Army

Koku Butai - Imperial Japanese Naval Air Force.

Kokutai- Japanese land based naval air group.

Kwangtung Army - An elite Imperial Japanese Army Unit stationed in Manchuria. It comprised 13 Divisions in 1940. It faced Soviet troops along the border.

L

LAA - Light Anti Aircraft

LAD - Light Aid Detachment. An engineering unit attached to a battalion to assist in repair and maintenance of vehicles and equipment.

LAFV - Light Armoured Fighting Vehicle.

LCA - Landing Craft, Assault

LCC - Landing Craft, Control

LCG (M) - Landing Craft, Gun (Medium)

LCI - Landing Craft, Infantry - large landing craft capable of holding 200 men. Of shallow draught, but with seagoing ability. The work horse of the Pacific War.

LCM - Landing Craft, Mechanised

LCP - Landing Craft, Personnel

LCP (R) - Landing Craft Personnel, Ramp

LCS - Landing Craft, Support

LCT - Landing Craft, Tank

LCVP - Landing Craft, Vehicle Personnel

Lethbridge Mission - A Military Mission (No. 220) despatched by the British Government in 1943 to the "Pacific and Indian Theatres to investigate measures for the prosecution of the war against Japan." It sent small parties into the forward area to gather information. It sought the despatch of New Zealand officers to India/Burma.

Lewis Gun - A light machine gun used by Allied forces.

LFASCU - Landing Force Air Support Control Units - Ground air support units.

LMG - Light Machine Gun

Logan Force - Unit which landed on the northern area of Mono Island with a view to establishing a radar station consisting of 34 Bn, 87 NCB and Argus 6. The unit encountered brisk combat with Japanese units intent on escaping Mono.

LSF - Landing Ship, Fighter Direction

LSI - Landing Ship, Infantry

LSM - Landing Ship, Medium

LST - Landing Ship, Tank - A large seagoing landing craft capable of carrying tanks and large numbers of men and supplies. An essential part of amphibious operations in the Pacific.

LT - Landing Team (Battalion).

LtA/A - Light Anti Aircraft.

Lt/Lieut - Lieutenant

Lt Col - Lieutenant Colonel

Lt Gen - Lieutenant General

LVT - Landing Vehicle, Tracked (Amtrac)

LO - Liaison Officer

L of C - Lines of Communication

LZ - Landing Zone

M

M1 - Garand semi-automatic rifle - the standard US rifle in World War II.

1 MAC - 1st Marine Amphibious Corps

MAG - Marine Air Group.

Mainyard - New Zealand Code Name for the Pacific Front Line.

Maj - Major

Maj Gen - Major General

Manpower Commission - Organisation in New Zealand tasked with the efficient use of personnel.

MARDIV - Marine Division.

MAW - Marine Air Wing

MC - Military Cross

Mercantile - The Allied code name for the Invasion of Manus, Admiralty Islands 1944.

MFA - Ministry of Foreign Affairs

MG - Machine Gun

MIA - Missing in Action

Min of Def - Ministry of Defence

mm - millimetre

MM - Military Medal

MMG - Medium Machine Gun

MO - Medical Officer

MOD - Ministry of Defence

Mort - Mortar

Mot - Motorised

MP - Military Police.

MT - Motor Transport

MTB - Motor Torpedo Boat

MT Fd Wkshp - Motor Transport Field Workshop.

N

NAS - Naval Air Station (US).

NCB - Naval Construction Battalion, i.e., Seabees.

NCO - Non-commissioned Officer.

Nambu - Japanese 7.7 millimetre light machine gun.

NARA - National Archives & Records Administration (US).

ND - Naval District.

N Force - New Zealand troops despatched to Norfolk Island - 36 Infantry Battalion, 215 Composite AA Battery, the 152nd Heavy Battery and 9 Mobile Field Troop (1,488 men).

No. 1 Islands Group - The main administrative and command organisation of the RNZAF in the South Pacific.

NATS - Naval Air Transport South Pacific. Air Transport System operated by US Navy - considered safer than SCATS. Operated by USN in rare areas and flew administrative passenger missions.

NCO - Non-commissioned Officer

Necal - New Caledonia

NLF - Northern Landing Force.

NLG - Northern Landing Group.

NZA - New Zealand Artillery

NZASC - New Zealand Army Service Corps - Army unit used for supply and support.

NZCID - New Zealand Committee of Imperial Defence. Created in 1933 tasked with the preparation of the War Book. Later becomes the Organisation for National Security.

NZE - New Zealand Engineers

NZEF - New Zealand Expeditionary Force.

NZEFIP - New Zealand Expeditionary Force in the Pacific.

NZLO - New Zealand Liaison Officer

NZMF - New Zealand Military Forces.

NZ Min - New Zealand Minister

NZOC - New Zealand Ordnance Corps.

O

OBOE ONE - Australian code name for the amphibious invasion of the small island off the coast of Borneo of Tarakan by the Australian 26th Brigade Group.

OC - Officer Commanding

One Day's Supply - The quantity of supplies used in estimating the daily expenditure by a unit.

One Mac - 1 MAC - First Marine Amphibious Corps

ONS - Organisation for National Security.

Operation Kiwi - NZ Code name for deployment of 3NZ Division to New Caledonia and the Solomon Islands.

OP - Observation Post

Op Nav - Chief of Naval Operations (US).

Ops - Operations

ORs - Other Ranks (i.e., not officers)

Orange - Colour used in US planning to designate Japanese forces.

Ordnance - A Military term referring to artillery, but also in a wider sense encompassing military stores such as ammunition, rations, etc.

P

Pac Flt - Pacific Fleet (US)

Pacific Star or Clasp - A NZ medal awarded to military personnel who served in an operational theatre of the PTO. Operational areas were defined to include Guadalcanal, New Georgia, Treasury Islands, Green Island, the Gilbert and Ellis Islands but not the garrison areas of Fiji, Tonga, New Caledonia, the New Hebrides, Norfolk Island or Fanning Island.

Pdr - Pounder

Pefras - Telegraphic Code Reference to Peter Fraser.

Pestilence - The US code name for the overall US offensive in the South Pacific Area initiated in July 1942.

PL - Platoon

Plg - Planning

PM - Prime Minister

PMA - Prime Minister of Australia

PMNZ - Prime Minister of New Zealand

PMUK - Prime Minister of the United Kingdom

Pnr - Pioneer

POA - Pacific Ocean Area.

POL - Petrol, Oil and Lubricants.

Portee - A 21 pounder gun carried on the back of a lorry ready to fire. Used by Commonwealth forces in the Desert War.

POW - Prisoner of War - also PW

Prov - Provisional - A unit formed from assets taken from other units on a temporary basis.

PT Boat - Patrol Torpedo Boat (USN)

Pte - Private

PTO - Pacific Theatre of Operations.

Q

Q - Quartermaster

Quad - Lorry for towing British field guns

R

RA -Royal Artillery

RAA - Royal Australian Army

RAAF - Royal Australian Air Force

RAN - Royal Australian Navy

RAMC - Royal Army Medical Corps

RAF - Royal Air Force (British)

RAP - Regimental Aid Post

RCT - Regimental Combat Team.

RAdm - Rear Admiral

Recce - Reconnaissance, also recn.

Red - The colour used by US planners to designate British or Empire forces.

Reinf - Reinforced.

Regt - Regiment

Res - Reserve

Ret or Retd - Retired.

Rikusentai - Japanese Naval Infantry.

RLT - Regimental Landing Team (US)

RM - Royal Marines (British)

RN - Royal Navy (British)

RNVR - Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve

RNEIA - Royal Netherlands East Indies Army (Dutch)

RNZA - Royal New Zealand Artillery

RNZAF - Royal New Zealand Air Force

RNZN - Royal New Zealand Navy

RNZASC - Royal New Zealand Army Service Corps - the organisation responsible for the supply of stores to the New Zealand Army. Under the Director of Ordnance Stores (DOS). There are Deputy Directors of Ordnance Stores (DDOS), Assistant Directors of Ordnance Stores (ADOS) and at Divisional level the Deputy Assistant Director of Ordnance Stores (DADOS).

rpm - rounds per minute (i.e., rate of fire of weapons).

RSM - Regimental Sergeant Major

RT - Radio Telephony - Wireless Transmission

S

SAA - Small Arms Ammunition.

SCAT - South Pacific Air Combat Transport Command

SEAC - South East Asia Command - Allied Command arrangement.

Sec - Section. In aviation terms, a unit of between 2-4 planes, in artillery terms 2-3 guns, in infantry terms a third of an Infantry Platoon.

Sgt - Sergeant

Sigs - Signals

SL - Searchlight.

SMLE - Short Magazine Lee Enfield Rifle - standard rifle of Commonwealth forces in World War II.

SNLF - Special Naval Landing Force (Japanese)

SOPAC - South Pacific Area of Operations. A US command that encompassed the Solomon Islands. From October 1942 to late 1944 Admiral Halsey commanded this area. He was in turn responsible to the Commander, Pacific Fleet, Admiral Nimitz.

Sp - Support, or, alternatively, self-propelled.

Spr - Sapper

Spt - Support

Sqdn - Squadron - in aviation terms, a unit of 18-36 planes, or armour vehicles or recce troops.

Squarepeg - The Allied code name for the invasion of Green Island Feb. 1944.

SSC - Secretary of State for the Colonies

SSDA - Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs.

Stonk - Concentrated Artillery Barrage.

Svy Tp - Survey Troop

SWPA - South West Pacific Area

T

TEAL - Tasman Empire Airways Limited

Territorial - A military unit made up of part-time voluntary soldiers (Commonwealth).

TEWTS - Tactical exercises without troops, i.e., map exercises.

TF - Task Force - generally a grouping of naval craft with supporting air and other units for the fulfilment of a particular purpose.

TForce - New Zealand troops despatched to defend Tonga.

Thirteenth Air Force - (13th USAAF) the USAAF unit that operated in conjunction with the 5th USAAF in the Solomon Islands.

Tk - Tank

T.O.E - Table of Organisation and Equipment

Toenails - US Code Name for the invasion of New Georgia, 20 June 1943-16 October 1943. A multi-national and multi-service campaign involving USMC, USXIV Corps, 3NZ Division and 5 Australian Division.

Towpath - A US Army Plan for the assault on Rabaul which envisaged the use of 2 US Marine Division and 3NZ Division. Cancelled in November 1943.

Tpr - Trooper

Tps - Troops; part of a squadron of tanks; part of a battery.

Trinsed - NZ Code name for 3NZ Division's Commander, Major General H.E. Barrowclough.

U

Ultra - Intelligence gained from the interception and decoding of Axis radio communications.

Unholy Four - The nickname given to four US Navy Troop Transport Ships active in the South Pacific in World War II - USS President Adams (APA-19), USS President Monroe, USS President Jackson and USS President Hayes. The nickname apparently derived from the fact that when crossing the international date line the ships "lost" a day, Sunday and Sunday services were therefore missed. The troops ships were active in transporting troops of 3 NZ Division.

USA - United States of America.

USAAF - United States Army Air Force.

USMC - US Marine Corps

USN - United States Navy.

USNR - United States Naval Reserve.

USS - United States Ship.

Universal Carrier - A tracked vehicle used by British and Commonwealth forces. Also known as a "Bren Gun Carrier" due to the ability to mount a Bren machine gun in the forward seat next to the driver. Because they were open topped they afforded the crew very limited protection. Used mainly for the haulage of ordnance and supplies.

V

VAdm - Vice Admiral

Val - Allied code name for the Aichi D3A dive bomber.

VE Day - Victory in Europe Day - 8 May 1945.

Vickers Machine Gun - Heavy machine gun used by Commonwealth forces.

VJ Day - Victory over Japan Day - 2 September 1945.

VLR - Very Long Range (in reference to aircraft).

VMF - US acronym "V" signifies fixed wing aircraft, "M" signifies US Marine Corps and "F" signifies a fighter unit.

W

WAAC - Womens Auxiliary Army Corps.

War Book - A planning document prepared by the NZ Committee of Imperial Defence setting out proposed action in the event of war.

WD - War Diary.

War Plan Orange - US Operational Plan for the defeat of Japan prepared by the US War Plans Division. It envisaged holding part of the Philippines and advanced bases in the Pacific whilst a US Naval Force fought its way to the relief of US garrisons. This was going to culminate in a Trafalgar-like battle with Japanese forces.

Watchtower - US Code Name for Guadalcanal-Tulagi landings - 7 August 1942. Wryly nicknamed Operation Shoestring by participants because of the lack of resources allocated.

White Poppy/Poppy - NZ Code name for New Caledonia.

WIA - Wounded in Action

Wildcat - Allied code name for Grumman F4F fighter (USN)

Williams Report, The - The report of British General Sir Guy Williams to the NZ Government on 1 October 1941 on the state of NZ defence. Recommendations included strengthening NZ defences, establishing coast watchers and strengthening the defences of Fiji and the northern approaches to NZ. Many of his recommendations were acted upon.

Winch - Code name for Winston Churchill.

Wkshp - Workshop

WO - Warrant Officer

WPD - War Plans Division (US).

WS - Code name for Allied Troop Convoys derived from the first initials of Winston Spencer Churchill.

W/T -Wireless Telegraphy.

X

XO - Executive Officer (USN).

Y

Y Service - Interception of Axis Radio Signals by a specialised allied unit.

Z

Zeke - or Zero - Allied code name for Mitsubishi A6M fighter (IJNAF).

APPENDIX B: LEGION OF THE LOST

Hail New Zealand's Third Division
Victims of doubt and indecision
Sent upon a labourer's mission
To Pacific shore.

First we wandered off to Suva,
Might as well have been Vancouver.
Now and then we heard a rumour
That we were at war.
See our shirts grow older
Torn across the shoulder.
At our store
There are no more,
And we grow daily colder.
Heark unto our tragic story,
Ours is not the path to glory.
We know not the battle gory
Though we are at war.

To Hell with party, sect and faction
We want nothing more than action;
Here we're but a minor fraction
Of the USA.

In the Middle East, our cobbers
Smashed Von Rommel and his robbers
While Benito got the slobbers
As he ran away.
Kiwis, marched together,
Fair or foul the weather;
But let us go
To fight the foe
And we will show them whether
We can fight for old New Zealand,
Keep our flag bright o'er our free land,
So that when it's over, we land
Soldiers of the war.

If I had a farm in New Caledonia
And a home in Hell, I'd go home right now.

Caledonian poems of the soldier William E. Scott

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Official Files – Archival Collections

A New Zealand

1 Archives New Zealand, Te Rua Mahara O Te Kawanatanga, Wellington, New Zealand

a Personal Papers

(i) Lt General Sir Edward Puttick

Series Four: WW2 – European Theatre of Operations

Series Five: COGS & GOC NZMF

Series Five: Liason Letters to Barrowclough

Series Six: Newspaper Clippings

Series Seven: Personal

Series Eight: Miscellaneous

Series Nine: Published Material

Series Ten: Maps

(ii) Walter Nash

Series 150: Defence 140-1, Files & Memos.

Series 345: Secret War Papers 1942-43

b Air Department

Air 25/2/634, Loss of Major General Owen Mead

Air 101, 1 COS6 ONS Report, 6 May 1938

Air 103, 12 Pacific Air Routes

Air 77, f Defence of Pacific

Air 118, 81f Defence of Pacific Narrative

Air 118, 81n Manpower

Air 1, 130/4/1, Pacific Area – Organisation of Higher Direction

Air 1, 130/8/7, Liaison with US Forces NCOs Pep SPHQ

Air Series 25, 25/2/634

Air 130/15/1, Operation Kiwi

Air 130/10/2, RNZAF Expansion 1943-4 Development and Employment of

RNZAF

Air 150/1 & 2 Operations Book

Air H3/3/3

Air H3/15/4

c Navy

NI 8/10, Intelligence, Pacific Islands, General

NI16/3/1, Parts 1 & 2, Combined Operations

Series 2, 030/38/17

d Army Department

AD Series 1, 275/1/80, Report of NZASC, Operations with 3 Division in the South Pacific

AD Series 1, 275/1/2, Misappropriation of Property

AD Series 12, Construction of Nadi Aerodrome November-December 1941

AD Series 12, 3/15, AA Equipment

AD Series 12, 28/3, Vol 1, Vol 2

AD Series 12, 28/3/9, Organisation Tanks Fiji

AD Series 12, S28/3/9, Organisation of 2 tank detachment for Fiji April-May 1942

AD Series 12, 28/4

AD Series 12, 28/15/1, Operation Kiwi

AD Series 12, DAZ 154/1/6

AD Series 12, Box 21, Secret Cables – Puttick

AD Series 12, 87/12/1

Secret Registry, 'MO' Series, 1922 -

Secret Registry, 'S' Series, 1939 -

AD Series S, 526/1, Volumes 1 & 2, Singapore Conference 1941

AD 28/3/44, 1 NZ Malaria Control Unit

AD 375/1/63, Reports of Engineers Activities

AD Series 12, Secret

AD S26/1, Higher Command – Pacific

AD S27/26, Defence Plans – New Zealand's

AD S28/1, Fanning Island – General, 2 Volumes July 1940-45

AD S28/2, 2NZ Division & 3NZ Division's

AD S28/2/26, Appreciations – War Against Japanese

AD S28/3, Defence of Fiji – 5 Volumes

- AD S28/3/1, Brigade Group, Fiji
- AD Series 12, S28/3/2, Guns for Fiji
- AD S28/3/8, Artillery, 8 Brigade Groups
- AD S28/3/10, B Force Instructions – 2 Volumes
- AD S28/3/11, Employment of Fijians
- e External Affairs
 - Command
 - EA153/181/pt 1, 1937, General, Imperial Conference
 - EA156/2/1, Imperial Defence Conference 1937
 - EA81/10/1 Pt 1, General South Pacific Command
 - EA81/11/1, NZ Chiefs of Staff Rep. at SOPAC HQ
 - EA83/2/1, Manpower Committee
 - EA84/3/1, Intelligence, General
 - EA81/1/1, Pt 1 General, Constitution and Admin General
 - EA81/1/3 Secret Sessions
 - EA81/1/6 Higher Direction of War
 - EA81/1/11 Maori War Effort
 - EA81/1/12 Higher Strategy
 - EA81/1/13 Pacific War Council
 - EA81/2/1, Pt 1, General, War Council
 - EA81/3/1, Pt 1, General, War Cabinet
 - EA 81/4/1, Chiefs of Staff Committee
 - EA1, 81/4/3-3, The Defence of French Oceania
 - EA81/6/1, ONS (Organisation of National Security)
 - EA81/8/1, NZ War Book
 - EA1, 81/10/12, Appointment General Barrowclough
 - EA1, 81/10/12, Appointment General Barrowclough
 - Defence of NZ
 - EA85/1/1, General
 - EA85/1/1, New Zealand Defence Policy
 - EA85/1/8, Pt 1, General, Appreciation of defence requirements of New Zealand in event of war with Japan, General Sir Guy Williams
 - EA85/1/22, Japanese plans for invasion of New Zealand
 - Tonga
 - EA86/14/1, Pt 1, General

EA86/14/2, Pt 1-2, Assumption of Defence

Fiji

EA86/15/1, Pt 1-2, General

EA86/15/2, Pt 1a, Provision of NZ Forces

EA86/15/8, Pt 1a, Defence of Fiji

Necal

EA86/19/1, Pt 1a, General

EA86/19/2, Pt 1 Garrison

Norfolk

EA86/20/1, Pt 1, General

EA86/20/1, Pt 2, Assumption of NZ Defence

Coastwatching

EA86/26/1, Pt 1, General

EA86/26/2, Pt 1, Personnel, 2 September 1943

Defence of Pacific

EA86/1/1, Pt 1, General

EA86/1/13 Pt 1, 19 October 1944 – 23 December 1944, Nimitz/Barrowclough

Discussions

EA1, 86/1/1, Defence of the Pacific – Defence of British Possessions in the
South West Pacific – Assumption of Responsibility by New Zealand

EA86/5/1, Pt 1, Fanning Islands

EA86/9/1, Pt 1a, General, British Solomon Islands

EA86/9/2, Pt 1, Operations in Solomons

EA86/27/10, Defence of the Pacific – Pacific Defence Conference 1939

EA86/11/1, Nissan Island

Army

EA87/3/1, Pt 1, General

EA87/3/2, Pt 1, MacKesy Report 22 April 1939

EA87/3/4, Pt 1, Review of Pacific Conference

EA87/3/10, Pt 1, NZ Officers for Indian Army

EA87/3/11, Employment & Support of 2NZEF

EA87/4/1, Pt 1-2 General, AirForce

Special Units

EA87/5/10, War Artists

EA87/5/11, Broadcasting Units

EA87/5/16, Pt 1, Film Unit (Pacific)
EA87/5/17, Public Relations 3NZ Division
Echelons and Reinforcements
EA87/6/1, Pt 1, General
EA87/14/1, General, Casualties
EA87/19/7, 3NZ Division
EA87/21/1, 3 Division General
EA87/21/2, Foreign Jurisdiction in Pacific
EA87/21/3, Return of Personnel to NZ
EA87/21/4, Disposal of Equipment of 3NZ Division
EA87/27/1, Provision of Forces for War
EA 28/3, US Plan of Relief
EA 28/19, Garrisons
EA181/1/3, Secret Session – Defence Policy
EA81/1/17, Scorched Earth
EA 81/1/28
EA Series 1, 84/3/1, Intelligence General
EA 87/21/1
EA 28, 28/15/4
EA 87/21/1, Pt 2, P.M. Department Papers on Defence
EA1, 87/3/1

f War Archives

1 Barrowclough Papers

WAI Series 9, Major General Barrowclough Correspondence

WAI Series 1, Personal

WAI Series 5, Governor General, July 1943-November 1943

WAI Series 9, S9 Correspondence with US Officers

WAI Series 10, Miscellaneous

WAI Series 14, Operations October 1943-April 1944

2 WAI Series 7, Photographs

3 WAI Series 8, Freyberg Papers

4 WAI Series 5, Maps

5 WAI 1, Unit War Diaries and Records and supplementary material
1939-45

WAI 1, DAZ sequence 1-543

WAI 1, DA 11/9/6/1 - Accidents
WAI 1, DAZ 30/1/16
WAI 1, DAZ 113/9/5
WAI 1, DAZ 121/1/1
WAI 1, DAZ 121/1/1/3
WAI 1, DAZ 121/1/1/8, 3NZ Division Intelligence Summary
WAI 1, DAZ 121/1/17
WAI 1, 121/1/7-9
WAI 1, DAZ 121/2/1/8, Intelligence Summary
WAI 1, 121/4/1/15
WAI 1, DAZ 121/6/1, Order of Battle of 3NZ Division, 1 March 1944
WAI 1, DAZ 121/9/2
WAI 1, DAZ 121/9/3/1
WAI 1, DAZ 121/9/A8/1, Discipline
WAI 1, DAZ 121/9/A8/2
WAI 1, DAZ 121/9/B/3/1
WAI 1, DAZ 122/1/26, Squarepeg
WAI 1, DAZ 126/1/13
WAI 1, DAZ 126/1/14
WAI 1, DAZ 126.7/15/2, 38 Field Regiment
WAI 1, 130/1/4
WAI 1, DAZ 131/1/1
WAI 1, 134/1/25
WAI 1, DAZ 137/15/1, Vella Lavella – Narrative 16 NZASC
WAI 1, DAZ 139/1/5
WAI 1, DAZ 149/1/5-6, Maps, Nissan
WAI Series 1, DAZ 151/1/21
WAI DAZ 151/1/23 Report on Operations, Treasury Islands
WAI 1, DAZ 151/9/3, Proceedings of Court of Inquiry
WAI 1, DAZ 151/9/15, Report on Treasury Islands Operation HQ 8 Brigade
WAI 1, DAZ 152/9/6, Troop Organisation Book USS Monroe
WAI 1, 155/1/13
WAI 1, DAZ 157/1/22
WAI 1, DAZ 157/15/1, 35 Battalion
WAI 1, DAZ 158/1/1-3

WAI Series 1, DAZ 158/1/21, Report No 1 Combat Team
WAI Series 1, DAZ 158/1/22, War Diary
WAI 1, DAZ 158/1/26, Commando Raid
WAI 1, DAZ 174/1/1/1-14
WAI 1, 182/6/1-6, Malaria Control Unit
WAI 1, 305/1/67, Report on Kaimai Exercise
WAI DAZ 426/33/5
WAI 1, DAZ 428/3/2
WAI 1, S9, Barrowclough Papers
WAI 9, S14 Operations 3NZ Division
WAI 1, DA 401.3/1, Narrative 2NZEF, IP December 1938-October 1944 2Vols
WAI 1, DA 407/33/2, Battle Casualties
WAI 1, DA 428/3/2, War Correspondents Despatch
WAI 1, DA 443/3/3, Chronology of 3 Division
WAI 1, DA 483.3/3, The Japanese View
WAI 1, DAZ 491/33/7, 8 Infantry Brigade
WAI 1, DAZ 503/1

Courts Martial

WAI 1, DAZ 113/9/5, Courts Martial 13 August 1942 – 6 July 1943
WAI 1, DAZ 113/9/6, Courts of Inquiry 18 October 1942 – 17 September 1944
WAI 1, DAZ 131/9/A8/1, Detention Barracks
WAI 1, DAZ 121/9/2, (Box 460) Courts Martial, August 1943 – 2 August 1944

g Department of Internal Affairs

Series 898 – Various Art Works depicting 3NZ Division

2 **Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand**

Papers of Alister McIntosh, A9/44/001
War Diary of COMSOPAC, Micro MS 0916
Photographs of 3NZ Division
New Zealand Parliamentary Debates

3 **NZ Army Museum, Waiouru, New Zealand**

Exhibits relating to 3NZ Division

4 **Auckland War Memorial Museum, Auckland, New Zealand**

Various exhibits of memorabilia

5 **Royal New Zealand Air Force Museum, Christchurch**

Logbooks 15 & 18 Squadron RNZAF

6 **Base Records, HQ NZ Defence Force, Trentham Camp, Upper Hutt**

Personnel files on 3NZ Division soldiers

Harold Eric Barrowclough

John William Barr

John Brooke

William Albert Cowan

William Henry Cunningham

Charles Staunton Duff

Gordon White Logan

Leslie Potter

Edward Puttick

Robert Amos Row

George C. Wales

B United States of America

1 **National Archives and Records Administration,**

Maryland (NARA)

Various documents relating to Operations Goodtime and Squarepeg

FE 25/A/16-3(3) Report on Occupation of Vella Lavella

PG218 JCS Central Decimal Files Box 31, CCS 698/1, JPS 391/4

2 **Library of Congress, Washington, DC**

Library of Congress Manuscript Division

The Papers of Ernest J King, Box 2, DA

The Papers of William Halsey, MS13, Halsey Box 15

3 **United States Naval Historical Center, Washington, DC**

a) Personal Papers of Fleet Admiral Nimitz, Series XIII, Folder 14

- b) FE25/A16-3(3) Pacific Fleet, Seizure and Occupation Green Islands
- c) Log of USS Greenling

4 **MacArthur Memorial, Alexandria, Virginia**

Photographs 3NZ Division

5 **Richard M Nixon Library, Yorba Linda, California**

6 **Seabee Museum, Port Hueneme, California**

7 **Naval Undersea Museum, Keyport, WA**

Material on USS Greenling

C United Kingdom

The National Archive, United Kingdom

CAB 21/497/22

D Australia

National Archives of Australia

MP 1049/9, Secret and Confidential Correspondence File 1846/4/101

E Canada

National Archives of Canada

WLM King Papers, Diaries MG 26, J13

Interviews and Correspondence

New Zealand

Adams, Lindsay - Correspondence

Baragwanath, Owen - Correspondence

Bee, Kathleen - Interview

Bee, Leslie - Interview
Bioletti, Harry - Correspondence
Caughey, Bill - Correspondence
Chilton, Maurice - Discussions
Clouston, Joan - Interviews
Cowan, William A. - Interviews
Crawford, John - Correspondence
Cunningham, Brian - Interviews
Davie, Gordon Campbell - Interview
Dick, Trevor - Interview
Glyn, Garrat - Interview
Graham, Gordon - Correspondence
Greenfield Forbes – Correspondence
Harris, Bernie - Interview
Haworth, Jenny - Correspondence
Hewson, Brian - Interview
Hodgson, George - Interviews
Holah, Rowan - Correspondence
James, Ashley - Interview
Kermode, Leo - Interview
Lawrence, Hugh - Interview
Luoni, George - Correspondence
Lysaght, Andy - Interview
Martin, John E - Correspondence
Munro, Ray - Discussions
Newson, Lawrence - Interview
Ordish, Alfred - Interview
Otto, Ray - Correspondence
Petty, Bruce - Correspondence
Plowman, Jeffrey – Interview/Correspondence
Ray, Otto - Correspondence
Renshaw, Peter - Interview
Robinson, W.J. - Correspondence
John, Rose - Interview
Rogers, Alan - Interview

Ross, Doug - Correspondence
Sen, Tom - Interview
Taylor, Les N. - Correspondence
Tucker, Ron - Correspondence
Tunncliffe, Jeff - Interview
Vautier, Wally - Correspondence
Whaley, Trevor - Correspondence
Williams, David - Correspondence

United States

Alexander, Joseph - Correspondence
Altobello, Brian - Correspondence
Ballendorf, Dirk - Correspondence
Barlow, Charles W. - Correspondence
Bartch, William H - Correspondence
Bergerud, Eric - Correspondence
Christ, James - Correspondence
Easley, Wilmer F. - Correspondence
Hatcher, Bill - Correspondence
Hilderbrand, W.C. - Correspondence
Hinda, George - Correspondence
Hitch, George - Correspondence
Murphy, Hubert T. - Correspondence
Peto, David C - Correspondence
Rottman, Gordon - Correspondence
Scott, Jesse - Correspondence
Townsend, Robert – Correspondence
Tschudi, George E – Correspondence

Fiji

Col. Mara, Jonisio, F.M.F. - Correspondence

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Lysaght, Andy 'Going Back' Unpublished Manuscript, Author's Collection.
Thomas, G.J., No 1 Diary, 4A Battery.

Third Division Histories Committee

1. Stepping Stones to the Solomons Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1946
2. Pacific Kiwis Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1947
3. Pacific Pioneers Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1945
4. The 36th Battalion Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1948
5. Pacific Saga Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1948
6. The Gunners Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1948
7. Pacific Service Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1948
8. Shovel, Sword & Scalpel Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1945
9. Tanks, MMG and Ordnance Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1947
10. Headquarters & Communications Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1947
11. Base Wallahs Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1946
12. Story of the 34th Wellington: AH & AW Reed, 1947

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